



# HOW RUSSIA IS RULED

*by*

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Author of

*'Myths and Realities in Eastern Europe,'*

*'Russia and Her Colonies'*

*Based on the series of broadcast talks 'Communism in Practice' and published by arrangement with the British Broadcasting Corporation*

LONDON

THE BATCHWORTH PRESS



Published in 1953 by  
Batchworth Press Ltd  
54 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1

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Clarke, Doble & Brendon Ltd  
Oakfield Press, Cattedown, Plymouth

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE



THIS book originated from a series of talks which the Overseas Service of the BBC broadcast in the winter of 1950-51 under the title 'Communism in Practice.' I should like to express my thanks and appreciation to the Corporation for having released the copyright.

For the purpose of publication the talks have been slightly re-edited; here and there a paragraph has been inserted to round off the picture, but on the whole they are reproduced as broadcast. Only Chapter 5 (Judges, Public Prosecutors and Barristers) has been added to the original series.

The talks were not written for one particular public but were addressed to people of different countries, professions, creeds and colour. They were meant as a first introduction to the problems of Communism.

The reader's interest in the chapters of this symposium will in all likelihood vary with his own national and social background, for it was one of the objectives of the series to show how Communism affected the various groups of society, such as the working class (Chapters 12 and 13), peasantry (Chapter 14), different groups of taxpayers (Chapter 15) and the soldier (Chapter 16). Chapters 6 and 7 are devoted wholly, and Chapter 11 in part, to the fate of colonial peoples under Communism.

The remaining chapters are of a more general nature.

Among them there are two which deal with the structure of power in the Soviet Union (Chapters 1 and 2), three which describe the police and judicial system (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) and two about the indoctrination of youth and adults (Chapters 11 and 12).


The entire factual material which this book contains was taken from Soviet newspapers and journals, official Soviet textbooks, and other books and pamphlets published by Soviet state publishing houses.

Acknowledgment is due to Mr. J. M. Mackintosh who contributed the chapter on the Soviet soldier.

WALTER KOLARZ



## INTRODUCTION



### *Communism: Practice versus Theory*

IT is difficult to find a definition of the word 'Communism' acceptable to everybody. In Western countries people usually describe as Communism the sum total of Communist activities all over the world as well as the political and economic order existing in Soviet Russia and the Soviet satellite states. In this book the term 'Communism' has been used in this sense. Russian Communists, however, interpret 'Communism' differently. In their opinion and in the light of Marxist-Leninist theory 'Communism' does not exist yet. It is but a promise and an aim for the future. Russia, so the Marxist-Leninist theoreticians say, has but completed the building of Socialism and is at present moving forward on the road to Communism.

What according to them would the age of Communism be like? Soviet propagandists have so far failed to give a detailed picture of the Communist Utopia but they have nevertheless indicated some of its most essential features. In the Communist society, so we are told, the needs of everybody will be satisfied. There will be complete equality between all human beings, all classes will disappear and so will the differences between town and country and between physical and intellectual work.

Money will lose all its importance, and even the state will 'wither away,' and with it all negative aspects of political power, including police and prison camps.

This *fata morgana* of the age of abundance plays a considerable part in Communist propaganda. It is intended to make people forget the harshness of Russian life under Communist rule, and to excuse the great sacrifices which the people of the Soviet Union are continuously making to the state without obtaining an adequate material compensation. At the same time Marxist-Leninist theoreticians have left no doubt that Communism will become reality only if Soviet Russia, the standard-bearer of the Communist idea all over the globe, proves its superiority over the so-called capitalist world in every single branch of human activity.

To secure the victory of Communism both in Russia and on a world-wide scale, the Soviet Union must, as a famous Bolshevik slogan puts it, catch up with the most advanced countries and surpass them. In other words the Russian workers, peasants and scientists must work in every respect more efficiently than their opposite numbers in the United States, Britain, Germany and France.

The Soviet Government has done a great deal to narrow the gap which for a long period had separated Russia from the rest of the world in the economic and technical field. Russia achieved this undeniable progress to no small extent with the help of that Western democratic society which the Soviet régime wants to destroy. The socialist reconstruction work in the USSR of the twenties and thirties was rendered possible by over ten thousand foreign experts and specialists who put their services at the disposal of the Soviet Government. The

strengthening of Soviet Russia's industrial potential depended also on those big supplies of machinery and equipment which the USSR received from Britain, the United States and Germany. Some of the most important industrial plants of the Soviet Union such as the iron and steel works at Magnitogorsk or the tractor works of Stalingrad and Kharkov could have been built only with foreign help.

To-day Communist Russia has still a great deal to learn from other more advanced countries. A comparison between the West and Russia is unfavourable to the latter, even in spheres where the Soviet Union claims its greatest achievements. Take the mechanisation of agriculture, for instance. The Soviet régime has always pinned high hopes on the tractor for the transformation of the entire village life. It has taken great pride in founding the biggest tractor works in the world. Notwithstanding all her efforts Russia's state and collective farms are still poorly provided with tractors, if compared with the private farmers of the United States and Britain.

At the end of 1950 there were on the average twenty-seven tractors per one thousand acres of grain crop land in the United States, thirty-nine in Britain, and not even two in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. It is true that the number of tractors has risen very steeply in the USSR, but so it has in other countries, in Britain for instance by six times between 1939 and 1950.

The Soviet Government has also made great play of the growth of the Soviet intelligentsia which it believes is a decisive factor in the transition from Socialism to Communism. Let us again look at figures and compare. We will find then that the number of students at the



universities of London and Paris roughly equals that of the students of all the thirty-two universities of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union is particularly proud of its Press, which is usually considered as a symbol of the increase in literacy achieved under the Communist régime. Russia, it is true, has to-day many more periodicals and newspapers than she had had under the Czarist Government. Nevertheless, there are three times as many weekly, fortnightly and monthly journals in Britain than there are in the USSR.

Of course, figures alone tell only half the truth. One must also examine the facts behind the figures. Newspapers, for instance, mean something quite different in a country where there is freedom of Press and in one where, as in Russia, the Press is a state institution. And here we come to another problem which is essential for drawing up a balance-sheet of Soviet Communism, namely the price which the Russian people have had to pay for all that is positive in Communist economic and cultural policy. Even a superficial glance at Soviet reality shows that this price has been the total elimination of political freedom, with all that this implies for the individual: prisons, concentration camps and deportations.

There are certain extenuating circumstances for these darkest sides of the Russian Communist régime. Even before 1917, Russia had been the most backward country of Europe as far as human rights were concerned. One may say that the Soviet régime only carried on the political methods of the Czars who used to exile their opponents to Siberia or force them to emigrate. But do historical facts really bear out this assertion? The facts

speak for themselves. In 1825 the most brutal of the last four Czars, Nicholas I, sent five people to the gallows when punishing the ringleaders of the most famous Russian up-rising of the nineteenth century. Only five people died for having staged an unsuccessful *coup d'état* in which the Governor of St. Petersburg, General Miloradovich, was killed, and which might easily have cost the life of the Czar himself. One hundred and nine years later, in 1934, the Soviet police ordered the execution of several hundred people, not for participation in a revolt in which the fate of the country and of the whole government was at stake, but as a reprisal for the assassination of one single man, Sergey Mironovich Kirov, a member of the Bolshevik Politbureau. This happened in the same city of St. Petersburg, now known as Leningrad.

It is also interesting to compare the number of convicts in Czarist Russia and in the Soviet State. On the eve of the First World War there were about thirty thousand forced labourers in the whole of Russia. This number increased to fifty thousand immediately before the revolution of 1917. The Communist Government on the other hand has used as many as one hundred thousand convicts for one single scheme carried out under the supervision of the Soviet State Police, the construction of the Baltic-White Sea Canal. And this is only one out of many building projects for which convicts have been conscripted and still are being conscripted in large numbers.

In the Soviet Russia of to-day, we look in vain for the smallest symptom of a 'withering away' of the state. The state shows no signs of abdicating any of its authority. On the contrary, the powers of the Soviet party and state apparatus, far from having been curtailed to the benefit

of the individual, have become in recent years even more formidable than they were before the war. Since 1946 the Soviet State has interfered in the most thorough and drastic way with music, literature, biology and economic science, and has established complete ideological uniformity wherever this did not already exist.

From the first day of the Soviet régime there has been no political democracy on the top level but democracy did at first at least exist to a certain degree in the lower spheres, in factories and in the villages. This 'democracy from below' has been abolished as well: in industry, as early as twenty years ago when Soviet factory managers became all-powerful, and in the villages the last traces of Soviet democracy are just about to vanish before our eyes. Without consulting the peasants the régime has embarked on a large scale merger of collective farms. It has established a new type of super-kolkhoz, which are in many cases too big to be run by ordinary peasants. They are handed over, therefore, to officials and agricultural experts with higher education. Thus the management of the farms is now taken away from the peasants just as the administration of the factories had been taken away from the workers.

Perhaps the Russian people had to renounce freedom and democracy to acquire a high degree of equality instead? Indeed, the revolution swept away all the old class privileges. It abolished the class of the land and factory owners as well as the old Czarist officialdom, and it even 'liquidated' the independent peasants; but it was not a classless society of equals which the Russian Communist Party erected on the ruins of the old order. It is one of the fundamental contradictions inherent in the



Soviet system that the régime which has aimed in theory at establishing equality is kept going with the help of a new elaborate system of inequalities.

A new ruling class has emerged in Soviet Russia. This class is made up by party and state officials, by factory managers and scientists, by a small section of highly-skilled workers and foremen, and by directors of state farms and machine tractor stations. The Soviet ruling class is thus different in its composition from the upper classes in other countries, but it has, nevertheless, all the essential features of a privileged social group. Its members have incomes far above the average, and they are entitled to better living accommodation and transport facilities than the ordinary mortal. Differences of income between the top and bottom of the new Soviet society are by no means less striking than those existing under a fully-fledged capitalist system. The rector of Moscow University, Alexander Nesmeyanov, for instance, earns twenty-three thousand roubles a month, which is about forty-six times as much as the wages of an average worker, and seventy to eighty times as much as the earnings of a particularly low-scale unskilled labourer.

Russian Communism has defeated its own purpose not only in its own country, where both the 'withering away' of the state and the establishment of equality seem to be more distant than ever, but also internationally. In order to consolidate the prestige of Communism in Russia itself the Bolshevik leaders saw themselves compelled to modify the original internationalist Communist ideology and to boost Russian national pride and Russian national traditions.

This combination of Russian nationalism and Communism while an advantage at home, proved to be a handicap in Soviet Russia's dealings with Communists in other countries. Stalin's Communism, with its strong nationalistic and imperialistic flavour, has antagonised even a country like Yugoslavia, where an important section of the population has always been pro-Russian for reasons of racial and religious kinship. Other East European nations, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria might have joined the Yugoslav revolt against the Kremlin but for the presence of Russian troops in their midst, or for fear of immediate Russian armed intervention.

Political leaders as well as many ordinary citizens of the small East European countries had been attracted by Communist theory but were soon disappointed by Russian Communism in practice. When they awoke from their illusions they found that they no longer enjoyed any freedom of action and that they were already the prisoners of Communist Russia. They could no longer rescue themselves, but their fate could serve at least as a warning to people in the non-Communist world.

# I

## THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION



THE Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the prototype of over seventy Communist Parties working in all five continents, has always represented only a tiny fraction of the Russian people. When it came to power in October, 1917, the party had less than 250,000 members out of a total population of 150,000,000. Ten years later, in 1927, when the Soviet Government drew up its first Five-Year Plan, the total number of Communists in Russia was still below 1,000,000. In 1940, when the population of the Soviet Union approached the 200,000,000 mark, not more than 3,876,000 people belonged to the party and of these over 1,300,000 did not have the status of full members. The Communist leaders themselves prevented a greater growth of the party ranks. They have always been anxious to safeguard to the party the character of a religious order. The Communist Party was to be different from any other party of the world. To be a Communist in the full sense of the word did not mean to subscribe to a political programme, to attend party meetings and to pay membership fees regularly. A Communist was supposed to belong



to his party body and soul. He had to follow his leaders blindly, he had to subordinate his entire personal life to the aspirations of the party. The acceptance of strictest military discipline was, and still is, an essential condition of Communist Party membership.

Throughout the period between the two world wars new members could join the party only after having complied with manifold formalities. No person, whoever his sponsors and whatever his qualifications, was admitted right away, but only on a trial basis as a so-called 'candidate.' During the period of candidacy, which could last for several years, the person in question was tested and politically educated before his promotion to fully-fledged membership.

### *Purges and New Recruitments*

From the moment of his admission into the fold of the party, the member is at the complete mercy of the party bureaucracy. He cannot leave it on his own initiative, for this would amount to an open gesture of defiance against the régime. He would risk losing his job, being arrested or deported. On the other hand, a party member can always be expelled for the slightest offence against party discipline. Almost right up to the Second World War the party authorities carried out periodical purges, which sometimes reduced the party membership by twenty to twenty-five per cent. After 1932, a party member could not only be expelled, he could also be demoted to the rank of a candidate, while a candidate could be transferred to the position of a so-called 'sympathiser.' The result of the purges was in many ways disappointing. Instead of

leading to a strengthening of the party *élite*, it consolidated the rule of bureaucrats, careerists and opportunists in the local party branches.

In 1939 the supreme party leadership thought, therefore, that the time had come for a change. The 18th Bolshevik Party Congress was summoned to Moscow, in March of that year, to ratify a new party statute, which abolished mass purges, and replaced them with individual expulsions. Also the recruitment of new party members was made easier. On the eve of the war the Kremlin had a natural desire to create the impression that the party was no longer the instrument of a small ruling caste, but a genuine people's party. Within less than two years, between March, 1939, and February, 1941, 1,500,000 people were consequently admitted into the party, on the basis of a simplified procedure.

During the war there was even more reason to show broadmindedness and liberalism in admitting new members. The party had every interest in recruiting soldiers and officers who had distinguished themselves at the front. It was proud to enrol as its members the veterans of the battles of Sevastopol, Stalingrad and Leningrad, and people who had been awarded high military decorations.

Many of these wartime members had only a poor education in Marxist-Leninist theory. Many had even joined the party for what might be described as 'wrong reasons,' from an orthodox Bolshevik point of view, such as the hope that a more liberal régime might be introduced in Russia after the defeat of Nazi Germany. These wartime members later constituted a great problem for the party apparatus. Some of them had to be expelled, while



the large majority was submitted to intense indoctrination courses.

As a result of the wartime recruitments the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has now nearly 7,000,000 members. This figure represents over five per cent of the adult population of the country, and over three per cent of the entire population. The Communist Party membership is very unequally distributed throughout the vast territory of the USSR. There are large areas where the membership is far below the average and does not reach one or half a per cent of the population as a whole. The Communist Party is primarily a party of the towns' folk, of the factory workers, bureaucrats and intellectuals. The main bulwarks of the party are therefore industrial centres such as Leningrad, the Donets Basin with its coal mines, the Urals region with its heavy industry and the oil city of Baku. Over ten per cent of the entire Communist Party membership is concentrated in Moscow, where party members work in the central state administration, in the party headquarters and in the big factories. The number of Communists is still fairly low in the rural areas of the Soviet Union, and it is also comparatively small in all territories which Russia annexed during and after the Second World War, such as the Baltic States and Eastern Poland.

### *'One State, One Party, One Leader'*

One must not imagine for a minute that the Communist Party as a whole is ruling the Russian State. The average member of the Communist Party has no more political rights than the rest of the population. In the first

few years of the Soviet régime, it is true, the situation was different. Discussion on vital political problems were then still taking place inside the Communist Party, high party officials were properly elected and genuine votes were taken on important issues. Various groups, each headed by powerful leaders, fought with each other for the influence in the party, until the group headed by Stalin, the Communist Secretary-General, succeeded in suppressing all rivals. This was achieved by the political and physical extermination of a large number of leading Communists, mostly members of the Old Guard, who had laid the foundations to the Soviet State. It must be said, in fairness, that Stalin has not invented the Russian totalitarian régime. All his opponents inside the party shared with him the conviction that Communist rule must be based on the formula 'One State, One Party.' Stalin's own contribution consisted only in enlarging this principle into 'One State, One Party, One Leader.'

As time went on the leader became more important than the party, not only did he determine party policy but also he had the last word in all questions of party doctrine. The whole party machinery had to be reshaped to adapt itself to this outstanding rôle of the leader. Discussions inside the party on matters of principle and substance could no longer take place, since they were decided on the top level. Genuine elections of higher party officials became impossible. Party congresses and conferences lost their original meaning and saw their main task in staging manifestations of loyalty to the leader. Between March, 1939, and October, 1952, no Party Congress was held at all, although the party statute

stipulates that a congress must be summoned every third year.

Under Stalin's unchallenged leadership the Communist Party of the Soviet Union became divided into two unequal parts: the big membership masses which have no say in the running of the party and the state, and a small nucleus forming the party apparatus and occupying the most important executive posts. The actual strength of this party nucleus is, of course, difficult to estimate, it is unlikely to exceed several tens of thousands. These include the secretaries of the provincial district and city organisations of the party and the staff of the Communist Central Committee.

### *The Central Committee*

The Central Committee is not what its name might indicate, namely just a committee. Certainly the committee exists also in the form of a deliberating body. As such it comprises 125 members, who meet several times a year to discuss urgent political and economic matters. More important, however, than this committee of 125 is the huge bureaucratic machinery, working formally on its behalf, but in reality under the guidance of Stalin and his closest associates. The Central Committee apparatus has the functions of super government. It has special departments for agriculture, industry, transport, finance, and for administrative and political matters. Each department checks the activities of a certain number of ministries of the Soviet Central Government. Such a supervision is necessary from the party point of view, since most ministers are not more than experts, who are occupying only subordinate posts in the party hierarchy.



The Central Committee of the Communist Party is controlled by a small circle of people to whom the Soviet Press usually refers as 'the closest collaborators of Comrade Stalin.' Until the Nineteenth Party Congress of October, 1952, these 'closest collaborators' formed the 'Politbureau' which had thirteen members. The Nineteenth Congress replaced the 'Politbureau' by a new body which is officially described as the 'Presidium of the Central Committee.' It has twenty-five full and eleven alternate members. The members of the 'Presidium' (which must not be confounded with the 'Presidium of the Supreme Council' mentioned in the next chapter) are not all equal in status. It is a fair assumption that the 'Presidium' is dominated by the old Politbureau members who form Stalin's immediate entourage such as Malenkov, the acting Party Secretary, Molotov, Stalin's first deputy as Prime Minister, and Beria, the man in supreme charge of state security.

Although the ordinary members of the Russian Communist Party have no political power, they have, nevertheless, very important tasks to fulfil. They are the eyes and the ears of the government everywhere. In the factories they have to watch over the fulfilment and over-fulfilment of the production targets. In the collective farms they have to fight those peasants who try to re-acquire private property in the form of small plots of land and cattle. In the universities they must be on the look-out for any sign of ideological heresy on the part of both professors and students. The Soviet Secret Police, too, is relying primarily on party members when recruiting its agents and collaborators.

*'Propagandists' and 'Agitators'*

Most organised Communists are also expected to play their part as propagandists and agitators. The Soviet jargon makes a difference between the two. The propagandist is a well educated Communist teaching the history of the Communist Party and the principles of Marxist-Leninist theory to a selected audience. The number of propagandists has increased more than three times since the beginning of the war. In 1950 they numbered 400,000. Agitators have a much cruder job, they have to explain to the masses of the people the day to day policy of the party and of the government. There are several millions of such agitators all over the Soviet Union. In the urban areas of European Russia there is one agitator for every thirty to fifty inhabitants.

You may ask why the Communist Party of the Soviet Union sees itself compelled to conduct this permanent intense propaganda offensive. After all, as far as can be ascertained, Russia has not suffered recently from any acute political unrest, and police measures have done away with every form of organised opposition long ago. The Soviet police, it is true, has been able to protect the régime against positive actions, but it has been powerless against those sections of the Russian public who have observed an attitude of sceptical indifference and passivity towards official policy. Millions of Russians are wondering why they have to bring, without adequate compensation, those sacrifices which the state is demanding from them every day. They cannot understand why life in Russia is still much more difficult than in the so-called

capitalist countries, and why the long-promised Utopia has not yet materialised. It is precisely the task of the agitator, and of every rank and file party member in general, to dispel such dangerous thoughts, and to eliminate the widespread feeling of apathy among the citizens of the Soviet Union.

'Dangerous thoughts' are not confined to non-party people, for the mere fact that a person belongs to the party is in itself no guarantee of his loyalty to the régime. This has been amply proved in recent years. The well-known author of *I Chose Freedom*, Victor Kravchenko, was a party member, and so was Colonel Tokayev, the most prominent Soviet deserter of the post-war period. The pilot, Pirogov, who escaped in his 'plane to the American zone in Austria from an airfield in the Western Ukraine, was a candidate member of the party. These cases, far from proving the absolute reliability of party members, even go to show that some of the most active and determined opponents of the régime may easily be organised Bolsheviks.



## II

# THE CONSTITUTION



A PERSON who wants to know how the Soviet State is run must read the Stalin Constitution of 1936, but he ought to read it with care. He ought to start his study not at Article I, which would be the normal thing to do, but at Article 126. That Article stipulates that the Communist Party is both the 'vanguard of the working people' and the 'leading core' of all its organisations. Since there are in the Soviet Union no organisations other than those of the working people, the political monopoly of the Communist Party is complete. Also the freedoms which the Soviet Constitution formally guarantees—freedom of speech, freedom of the Press, freedom of assembly and even freedom of street processions and demonstrations—exist only for the so-called organisations of the working people, in fact for Communist organisations.

The Soviet Constitution of 1936, which is now in force, deals only very briefly with the rights and freedoms of the Soviet citizens. Most of the Soviet fundamental law is taken up by provisions regulating the legislative and executive powers in the USSR and the relationship between the Central Government and the Union Republics.

The rights which the individual republics are to enjoy according to the Constitution are in some cases as remote

from reality as the freedoms of the individual citizens are. Article 17, for instance, reserves to every Union Republic the right freely to secede from the USSR. In point of fact, any suggestion tending towards the secession of a Soviet Republic from the Union would be stigmatised as high treason. Far from granting such self-determination to the Union Republics, the Soviet Government has forced quite a number of formerly independent territories to join the Union against their will. The Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are cases in point.

### *The Soviet 'Parliament'*

In the field of parliamentary institutions the Soviet Constitution has not invented anything new. After various experiments the Soviet Government has created a two-chamber parliamentary system. The two Houses of the Soviet Parliament which together form the Supreme Council or Supreme Soviet are the Council of the Union and the Council of Nationalities.

The Council of the Union is elected on the basis of proportional representation. The Council of Nationalities constitutes in theory a concession to the non-Russian peoples of the USSR and its existence is supposed to mitigate the effects of the overwhelming Russian-Ukrainian majority in the first chamber. The Council of Nationalities has only a remote similarity to parliamentary institutions of genuine federal states, the American Senate, for instance, where every state of the USA whether large or small has an equal representation. In the Soviet Council of Nationalities there is no such equality. The sixteen



fully-fledged Soviet Republics have twenty-five representatives each, Autonomous Soviet Republics only eleven and Autonomous Provinces only five deputies. This system of discrimination makes little sense since a Soviet Republic is not necessarily larger than an Autonomous Republic. Thus the Tartars, one of the three largest Moslem peoples of the Soviet Union, have only an Autonomous Republic. Their representation on the Council of Nationalities is therefore inferior to that of the tiny Karelo-Finnish Soviet Republic with only 800,000 inhabitants.

For two reasons we must not overrate the practical importance of what may be called the Soviet parliamentary system. Firstly, the Soviet Parliament is not properly elected; and secondly, neither the Council of the Union nor the Council of Nationalities has any real powers. Three general elections have been held since the new Constitution has come into force and in all of them the peoples of the Soviet Union had no choice of candidates. All they could do was to vote for the candidates of the 'Block of Communists and non-Party People.' This Block is one of the numerous fictitious notions with which Soviet propaganda operates. It does not owe its existence, as its name might indicate, to an agreement concluded between Communists and non-party representatives. The Block just means the Communist Party. The candidates of the Block are, in fact, appointed by the Soviet Government, and the Soviet voters have never dared to reject even a single one of them.

A person described as a 'deputy to the Supreme Council' is as a rule not more than the owner of a distinguished title which is awarded in the same way as a medal

or an order. A Soviet deputy is not supposed to do any parliamentary work such as is performed in the British House of Commons or in the French Chamber of Deputies. His public duties are limited to an annual trip to Moscow where he must listen to a number of speeches and endorse government decrees which have been passed and put into effect long ago. After ten days or a fortnight the deputy returns to his home to resume his regular job. The deputy is frequently a party or state official, sometimes a famous artist or scientist, a factory worker who has achieved particularly high output, or a collective farm chairman.

### *The Presidium of the Supreme Council*

The real legislative power in Russia is vested in thirty-three professional politicians who form the Presidium of the Supreme Council, and are almost permanently in session. Practically all important legislative measures of the past few years were not taken by a full meeting of the Supreme Council but only by its Presidium. Even changes of the Constitution are decided by the Presidium alone. Thus the Presidium abolished the seven-hour working day guaranteed by the Constitution and introduced the eight-hour day instead. The Presidium of the Supreme Council has the right not only to issue decrees but also to proclaim a state of war as well as martial law either in separate localities or throughout the USSR. It can also appoint and release both ministers and the officers of the Soviet high command. The Presidium of the Supreme Council has made ample use of all its constitutional privileges with one exception. The Constitution entitled the Presidium to organise nation-wide referendums on

important legislative measures. No such plebiscite has ever taken place.

It would appear that the Presidium of the Supreme Council is an extremely powerful body, but this is not the case. The Presidium is merely an executive organ, a 'transmission belt' through which the hierarchy of the Communist Party runs the country.

### *The World's Largest Government*

All we have said about the Supreme Council makes it clear enough that the Soviet Parliament is not a parliament in the generally accepted sense of the term. Nor is the Soviet Council of Ministers a government as understood by the rest of the world. The Soviet Council of Ministers is only another transmission belt in the hands of the Communist Central Committee for the implementation of the Party line. It comprises Prime Minister Stalin, fifteen Deputy Prime Ministers and over fifty ministers responsible for every sector of national activity, ranging from the police to the cinema.

Fourteen years ago, at the time of the adoption of the present Constitution, the Soviet Union had only eighteen ministers. Since then their number has increased with every year. It is true to say that no central state machinery all over the world is so inflated as that which controls the Soviet Union. There is, for instance, a special ministry for the electricity industry, and another for electric power stations. One ministry deals with agricultural machinery, but not with all such machinery, for tractors fall within the competence of the Ministry of the Automobile and



Tractor Industry. In many cases this far-reaching specialisation makes little sense, for work between the various ministries is not divided up as neatly as one might expect. The Ministry of Building Materials controls not even half the brick factories of the country, for a large number of other ministries produce building materials as a sideline of their activity. The Ministry of Transport administers not only transport undertakings, but also 3,500 elementary and secondary schools for children of railwaymen. The reorganisation of the Soviet Government goes on almost all the time, and there are ministries which have been founded and abolished several times since 1938.

The Ministries of the Central Government are in exclusive charge of foreign trade, transport, of all basic industries, of mining, and, of course, of foreign affairs and defence. The extensive powers of the Central Government leave little scope to the governments of the sixteen Soviet Republics. They are 'Sovereign States' on paper, but they have no control whatever over the most important industrial undertakings and national resources in their territory. Let me give you some examples. It is well-known, for instance, that roughly half of the entire Soviet oil production comes from Azerbaidzhan, a Soviet Republic in Trans-Caucasia. It might be expected, therefore, that the Government of Azerbaidzhan would have some say in the production and the disposal of that oil. In reality a Ministry for Oil Industry in Moscow settles all problems concerning the Azerbaidzhan oil. Again, the Central Asian Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan is famous for its mineral riches; it produces over half of Russia's copper, lead and zinc, and its sub-soil contains large quantities of other non-ferrous metals. All these assets of

the country are administered from Moscow by the Minister of Metal Industry, who is a Russian.

### *The Powers of the Sixteen Republics*

Each of the sixteen Soviet Republics has also a constitution of its own. There is no need to describe these constitutions in detail for they contain little that is not already included in the Constitution of the Union. In reading the fundamental laws of the sixteen republics one cannot help feeling that the Moscow Government has simply imposed on all of them one and the same draft constitution, with a very few blank spaces for the insertion of certain provisions about their coat of arms, their flag and their official languages. Apart from such technical points of detail the sixteen constitutions are completely identical not only in contents but even in wording.

From them we learn, however, that the governments of the individual republics are also fairly large bureaucratic machines with twenty-five to thirty ministries. Most of the republican ministries are the local agencies of the central administration and they can do no more than implement orders received from above. In each republican government, it is true, there are five or six ministries which are not just branches of the central administration but ministries in their own right. They are allowed to deal with very small matters which in any other country would fall within the competence of a town council.

Thus each republican government includes a Ministry for Municipal Economy in charge of water works and small power stations. A Ministry for Local Industry controls the production of certain types of consumer

goods, a Ministry for Motor Transport supervises the functioning of local bus lines. There is also a Ministry of Education in each Union Republic which confines its activity to administrative problems of the primary and secondary schools. The Central Government decides all fundamental questions regarding education and it also administers directly the universities and professional training colleges throughout the Union.

An amendment to the Soviet constitution passed early in 1944 stipulated that each Union Republic was to have a Minister of Foreign Affairs and a Minister of Armed Forces. It does not seem that the second part of the amendment has been implemented and that local Defence Ministries have ever come into being, but it is true that there are now foreign ministers in at least most of the sixteen republics. These foreign ministers are unique in the history of diplomacy. They have no direct contact with foreign countries, since none of the Union Republics keeps diplomatic representatives abroad. As a matter of fact Britain did try to establish direct diplomatic relations with the Ukraine but the British offer was turned down. The Soviet Central Government thought it preferable that the Ukraine, a country of 40,000,000 inhabitants should conduct its relations with Britain and other countries through Moscow alone.

The Soviet Government has published the text of the Soviet Constitution in all major languages of the world. In doing so the Kremlin apparently believed that the Constitution had a considerable propaganda value, that it would prove to people of every land what a free and democratic country the Soviet Union was. It is difficult to understand how the Soviet Union could have indulged

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in this illusion, for the Soviet Constitution can hardly impress an unbiassed reader.

The Constitution would be even less impressive if it were published in the same form in which it was submitted in 1936, to the extraordinary 8th Congress of Soviets. Then the document still carried at the end the names of its thirty sponsors. Of these thirty, four have since died a natural death, eleven others headed by Stalin himself either still occupy important government or party posts or at least are positively known to be alive. This adds up to fifteen. The remaining fifteen have disappeared, most of them almost immediately after the adoption of the Constitution. They include three former vice-premiers of the Soviet Central Government, prime ministers and presidents of Union Republics, and other high Soviet dignitaries. Some of them have committed suicide in expectation of their arrest and trial, others were executed, others again have died in prison.

Their fate showed the world how far away from reality is the 'inviolability of the person' which an article of the Constitution expressly guarantees.

### III

## THE POLICE



THERE is hardly another date in the history of Soviet Russia which is as important as December 20, 1917. On that day an institution known as the 'Cheka' was founded. Its full name was 'Extraordinary Commission for the Fight against Counter-Revolution and Sabotage,' but it is usually called by the Russian initials 'Cheka.' This was a police force with the most far-reaching powers. Its impact on the political life of the country by far exceeds the influence which the 'Okhrana,' the police of Czarist Russia, exercised before the Russian Revolution. Stalin himself compared the 'Cheka' with the Committee of Public Safety of the Great French Revolution, but this comparison does not do full justice to the police apparatus which Communism created in Russia. The Committee of Public Safety as an instrument of political terror was in being only sixteen months. But the 'Cheka' in its various incarnations has been in existence almost as long as the Soviet régime itself.

The 'Cheka' has changed its name repeatedly. In February, 1922, the Soviet Government re-named it for the first time and decided to disguise the much-dreaded institution by the harmless-looking title 'State Political



Administration.' This is the actual meaning of the well-known abbreviation GPU. In 1934 the GPU was reorganised into the NKVD, which stands for People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. In 1946 all Soviet 'People's Commissariats' changed their names into 'Ministries' and the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, therefore, became the Ministry of Internal Affairs, known under the abbreviation of MVD.

Despite all these manifold transformations and reorganisations, the Soviet political police has always remained true to the description contained in the first title. It has always remained an extraordinary commission for the fight against the opponents of Communism and against heretics inside the Communist camp itself. Although the original name 'Cheka' was in force for roughly four years only, the Soviet people still refer to the members of the state police as 'Chekists' or members of the Extraordinary Commission.

What are the tasks and what is the rôle of the police ministry—the MVD as it is now called—in Communist Russia to-day? In answering this question we shall dismiss all accounts of the MVD emanating from persons hostile to the régime, including former agents of the Soviet police machinery. We shall rely only on official documents, laws, decrees and on an up-to-date text-book on administrative law which is used at the present time in all law faculties of Soviet universities.

Let us say right from the beginning that the police ministry, the MVD, carries out quite a number of duties to which nobody could possibly take exception. The MVD is concerned, amongst other things, with the registration of births, deaths, marriages and divorces;

with the organisation of fire brigades; with the regulation of street traffic; and with the prevention of ordinary crimes.

The MVD has, however, not become notorious for this part of its activities. It has become notorious because of its vast machinery for the supervision of the Soviet people. The MVD is a super ministry watching over all other ministries, it is the chief organ on which the safety of the Communist dictatorship is based.

### *The Structure of the MVD-MGB*

The very structure of the MVD shows the great variety and complexity of tasks to which the ministry has to attend. The most important department was originally the Chief Administration of State Security. It was so important that it had to be transformed in 1943 into a special ministry, the MGB, or the Ministry of State Security. The exact functions of this new ministry have never been explained in detail. It is, however, known to specialise in fighting major offences against the Soviet State, such as high treason and espionage. It is in charge of what might be called the strategic planning of security measures while the day to day work is left to the MVD, the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In recent years the MGB has continuously widened its scope at the expense of the MVD and the dividing line between the two ministries has become extremely vague. For the purpose of the following analysis it matters little whether a given institution is under the command of the MVD or MGB, and we are, therefore, describing the police ministry as it existed before the division.

A vast amount of the energies of the police ministry is absorbed in supervising political and other prisoners. The MVD department in charge of them is the Chief Administration of Corrective Labour Camps. The MVD, however, does not only administer concentration camps, it also sees that the camps are always well populated. A decree passed in November, 1934, entitles a Special Council of the MVD to send to camps for periods up to five years persons regarded as 'socially dangerous.' The council, which is made up by the highest officials of the police ministry, must not be mistaken for an institution in any way similar to a court of justice. It does not itself interrogate the 'socially dangerous' persons, but decides their cases in their absence on the basis of written evidence alone.

The decree of November, 1934, also empowers the MVD to exile 'socially dangerous' persons for a period up to five years to remote places of the USSR somewhere to the north of the Arctic Circle or to Central Asian desert areas. A milder form of punishment, also very much in use, is the expulsion of a person from his place of residence with the proviso that he must in future not live in the capital nor in a large town nor in an industrial centre. This form of exile has at least the advantage that the person in question can himself select the place in which he wants to live.

It is, perhaps, necessary to add that these measures of banishment and expulsion which the MVD Council can order without any intervention of a judge or a court are part of the peace-time order of the USSR. In times of war much harsher regulations come into force, including



the immediate execution of offenders against the interests of the state.

We will get a better idea of the great versatility of the MVD if we look into yet another of its specialised agencies, the Chief Administration of Highways. At the first glance there appears nothing sinister about the existence of this government department, although one might think that highways ought to be administered either by a Ministry of Public Works or by a Ministry of Motor Transport. What has the police ministry got to do with the highways? The answer is simple enough: roads have to be maintained and in Soviet Russia they are maintained with the help of the compulsory mobilisation of labour. That is the point where the MVD comes in. The MVD mobilises the whole rural population for road repairs. All men between eighteen and forty-five years of age and women up to forty years of age have to work during six days every year on Soviet Russia's highways. They do not receive any payment, and they even have to lend their transport free of charge for the job.

### *The Auxiliary Organs of the MVD*

Even such a highly trained and efficient force as the Soviet police cannot be everywhere at the same time. Its hundreds of thousands of members alone are not sufficient to guard the Communist order. The MVD has recruited, therefore, a large network of agents from among all groups of Soviet society. There is first of all the large army of part-time assistants which the MVD keeps in the villages. Their official title is 'rural executives' but one may call them also more appropriately village informers.



According to a Soviet decree of 1935 the 'rural executives' have to assist the village council and the police in protecting the social order against hooliganism and other crimes. They also have to help to keep intact the so-called 'socialist property,' the property of collective and state farms. Another of their tasks is to escort arrested persons from the village concerned to the nearest prison. Every rural locality of the Soviet Union, however small, must have one village informer, the larger villages must have one for every three hundred inhabitants.

Both in the villages and in the towns the MVD relies on the 'police assistance brigades' which are organised in industrial undertakings and in universities, in collective farms and state farms, on the railways and on ships. In the words of a Soviet decree these brigades must give active support to the police against any infringement of the rules governing socialist community life. Such infringements include all expressions of opposition to the régime, every manifestation of an anti-Soviet attitude. The brigades may be provided with fire-arms for the execution of special operational assignments to be carried out on behalf of the MVD and under its guidance. But even these specially-picked brigades of volunteers are not considered sufficiently trustworthy to keep fire-weapons permanently. They have to hand them back to the regular police as soon as the special assignments in question are completed.

### *The Passport System*

The supervision of the population of the USSR by the MVD has been greatly facilitated by the introduction of

a rigorous passport system. Every Soviet person who has reached the age of sixteen and is living in a town, a rural district centre or a workers' settlement must have a passport. All persons working in state farms, or in transport undertakings in the countryside, as well as the entire village population of the Moscow province must likewise have passports. The passport system, apart from being a security measure, is intended to strengthen labour discipline. Workers employed in the armament industry, in coalmining, transport and other vital economic enterprises have to hand over their passport to the works management, which issues special certificates to its employees instead. The same applies to the entire staff of state banks, savings banks, and in general to all people dealing with money. Without a passport no person can get work in towns, nor even living quarters.

In enforcing the passport regulations the police is again supported by a large number of collaborators—caretakers, nightwatchmen and tenement officials. These 'house administrators' have to see to it, for instance, that all new tenants punctually present their passports; and they must assist the police against their own tenants whenever the MVD wants to impose on them administrative penalties or to search their flats.

Nowhere is the MVD as powerful as in the border areas of the Soviet Union. One of its departments, the Chief Administration of Border and Internal Security, is sovereign master of a fourteen mile (twenty-two kilometre) wide border zone which runs continuously parallel to the immense land frontiers of the USSR. In the border zone troops are employed to confiscate property or even

to expel the population of whole villages, as well as to make summary arrests or to search houses.

An ordinary passport is not sufficient if a person wants to enter the border zone. He must have, in addition, a special pass made out by the police organs of his regular place of residence. After having arrived at his destination in the border zone he must register within twenty-four hours with the authorities. Also when leaving the border zone he must report to the MVD. Every permanent inhabitant of the border zone must not only have a passport but must also get a special MVD visa for it.

If it is already difficult for the average Soviet citizen to move within the border zone it is virtually impossible for him to go abroad. Theoretically, every Soviet citizen may apply for a foreign passport; in practice only official persons and delegations of Communist organisations are allowed to leave the country. As an additional precaution these delegations usually include a member of the MVD, whose task it is to check on his fellow delegates. Regulations about the granting of passports for foreign travel, which had always been very severe in the Soviet Union, have been further tightened up after the war. Thus the MVD refuses at present exit permits even to Soviet citizens who are married to foreigners.

It has taken a long time for the Soviet political police to become a really reliable weapon in the hands of the Communist Party. For years Soviet police chiefs and party chiefs proper seem to have conducted a hard struggle for power behind the scenes. This struggle was terminated at the end of 1938 after one supreme police chief — Menzhinsky — had been murdered, another —



Yagoda — executed, and a third — Yezhov — had disappeared forever from the political scene. To day there can be no doubt that party, state and police form one single whole in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.



## IV

# FORCED LABOUR AND THE PENAL CODE



THE Soviet Government has never denied that forced labour does exist in the USSR. There was even a time when the Soviet Government not only admitted the existence of forced labour camps but actually advertised them as a new humanitarian system of punishment. Officially inspired articles and pamphlets, books and photographs, told the whole world that the Soviet 'corrective labour camps' constituted a wonderful experiment in social education.

The original enthusiasm which the Communist Government showed about the camps was more than mere propaganda. Many Soviet leaders, remembering their own sufferings in Czarist gaols, were sincere in their desire to replace the old-fashioned prisons by camps which were to lay the main stress on the education of the criminals, and not on their punishment. With the general tightening up of the Soviet dictatorship this humanitarian outlook was dropped. Forced labour became a powerful political weapon which the Soviet Government very soon ceased to consider as a subject suitable for publicity. To-day the official silence on the forced labour camps is almost absolute.

Forced labour in the Soviet Union has acquired its present importance on account of the fact that, in addition to punishment, it has developed into an inseparable part of the Soviet economy. Soviet corrective labour camps are expected to fulfil a dual function. On the one hand they are to render innocuous both political opponents to the régime and genuine criminals; on the other hand they are intended to build up a gigantic manpower reserve.

### *What is a Crime?*

The corrective labour camps draw the large army of their inmates from two sources: namely, from the arbitrary actions of the police ministry, the MVD; and from the normal working of the Soviet judicial apparatus. The police ministry is needed to accelerate the deportation of individuals to camps and to handle cases of mass deportation of social and ethnical groups. The Soviet courts have, however, sufficiently far-reaching powers to act themselves as purveyors of convict labour on a big scale. The courts derive their powers from the Soviet penal code.

If we glance quickly at that code we will understand why the number of persons in Russian corrective labour camps is bound to be high. The most essential provisions of the code will also explain other characteristic features of the Soviet Union, in particular the impossibility of any opposition activities in the Communist State. Let us say right from the beginning that the word 'crime' is not used in the Soviet Union in the same sense as it is in any non-Communist country. 'Crime' is interpreted in the Soviet Union with such elasticity that thousands of persons, who

nowhere else in the world would come into conflict with the law, can be sent in Russia to corrective labour camps through formally correct legal procedures.

This applies particularly to all offences committed in the political sphere. Indeed, Soviet penal law knows as many as thirty different kinds of 'counter-revolutionary crimes' of which about thirteen are classed as 'grave state crimes.' The penalties provided for most of them range from three years' imprisonment in corrective labour camps to death by shooting. If we look closer at the so called state crimes we will realise how easy it is for a Soviet citizen to become convicted of one of them and to disappear in a camp for years, perhaps for a lifetime.

A person may become convicted, for instance, for having 'relations with a foreign power with counter-revolutionary aims,' or for rendering 'assistance to the international *bourgeoisie*.' Both offences can refer to practically any private contact which a Soviet citizen might have with non-Communist foreigners and foreign states. 'Relations with a foreign power' and 'Assistance to the international *bourgeoisie*' are crimes which are different from espionage as prosecuted in every other state.

Soviet penal law, too, includes a special espionage article which covers both violations of military secrets and the disclosure of a wide range of other information regarding foreign trade, foreign exchange operations, foreign policy, inventions and discoveries. After the war, when the Soviet Government embarked on a hostile policy against the Western Powers, the Soviet leaders felt that the espionage article of the code was still not sufficient. In June, 1947, the Soviet Government issued a new decree



describing as state secrets 'all information not contained in official data.' The new decree threatened with confinement in corrective labour camps for terms of five years and more, not only persons who betrayed state secrets but also those who had simply mislaid official documents.

### *Wreckers and Counter-revolutionaries*

While comparatively few people in the Soviet Union have a chance to get in touch with, or to pass on information to, foreigners, almost every person occupying a responsible post in the Soviet State may commit another important counter-revolutionary crime known as 'wrecking.' This term comprises every form of undermining activities in industry, transport, trade, banking and co-operatives.

The law stipulates, it is true, that 'wrecking' has to be carried out with counter-revolutionary motives but, in practice, the mere non-fulfilment of output targets, or miscalculations of production costs, raw material and manpower requirements, may be considered as 'wrecking.' The 'wrecking' article of the Russian penal code itself constitutes a permanent threat suspended over all factory managers, chiefs of rail and water transport and bank directors, in short over everybody playing a more prominent part in the economic life of the country. The 'wrecking' article has heavily hit not only the officers, but also the general staff of the Soviet planned economy system. Thus many distinguished members and heads of departments of the state planning commissions responsible for the first and second Five-Year Plans were either

sent to corrective labour camps or executed as alleged 'wreckers.'

Even government statisticians producing figures unfavourable to the prestige of the Soviet Government can be sentenced on the basis of the 'wrecking' article. This actually happened to the team in charge of the all-Union census of 1937. The results of the census showed a decline of the population of the Soviet Union which prompted the Government both to destroy the census results and to punish for 'wrecking' those who had compiled them. 'Wrecking,' incidentally, must not be confused with sabotage, which figures in the penal code as a separate crime.

While 'wrecking' can be committed in general only by people of some standing in Soviet society, practically every Soviet citizen can be guilty of 'counter-revolutionary propaganda and agitation.' The term 'counter-revolutionary propaganda' again must not be taken too literally. It simply means any kind of propaganda which in the official view might weaken the Soviet régime.

An official commentary on the penal code written by three prominent Soviet lawyers shows the all-embracing character of this article. It points out that a person can commit the crime of counter-revolutionary propaganda not only by distributing anti-Soviet leaflets but also by the help of works of art. Music and songs are especially mentioned as cases in point. The article also applies to persons who pass remarks against the régime in private conversation. In the rural districts the article serves to strengthen the collective farm system. A special ruling of the Supreme Soviet Court has stipulated that any agitation against discipline in collective farms is to be looked

upon as counter-revolutionary and is to be punished with imprisonment from six months upwards.

It is almost a matter of course that in a one-party state like the Soviet Union any attempt to form a non-Communist organisation is equally liable to punishment. The mere membership in such an organisation constitutes a crime in the Soviet sense even if the member in question has not worked against the régime actively.

### *'Failure to Report'*

Soviet penal law is quite generally based on the principle that all citizens must give positive support to the régime even against their own children, parents, husband or wife. This is the background to yet another state crime which may be translated as 'failure to report.' Persons knowing about a counter-revolutionary crime and not reporting it to the authorities are liable to imprisonment. This duty of denouncing, insisted on in the penal code, applies also to oral counter-revolutionary propaganda, if committed in the family circle. To mention an extreme case Soviet penal law makes it an obligation for a son to denounce his father if he tells a joke at home directed against the government.

The collective responsibility of the family is carried particularly far in the case of members of the armed forces guilty of espionage and desertion. The adult members of the family of a deserter are punished with exile for five years according to an amendment to the penal code passed in 1934. Family members of traitors and deserters from the Soviet armed forces may also be treated as accomplices, in which case they may be sent



to camps for periods up to ten years. These rigorous provisions of the penal code against the families of soldiers came into force long before the war, but they have acquired particular significance in recent years. The fact that Soviet occupation troops are kept in various parts of Europe has led to an increase in the number of desertions, which would probably be more frequent if the Soviet régime had not established the principle of collective family responsibility.

The number of people which the joint efforts of the MVD and the Soviet courts have transformed into forced labourers is difficult to estimate. As long as the Soviet Government itself refuses to supply any statistics about the extent of forced labour in Communist Russia the world has to rely on rough and inaccurate estimates made by former camp inmates and refugees from the USSR. These refugees have asserted that the number of prisoners in Soviet Russia must be put as high as ten, fifteen or even twenty millions. However, figures are not so important as the moral principle. Even if we assumed that there are not more than four or five million convicts in the Soviet camps the case against forced labour would be no less strong.

### *The Economic Importance of Forced Labour*

Whatever the true figure of the Soviet labour camp inmates might be it is a fact that forced labour has become an assential means of implementing the Five-Year Plans and Russia's industrial revolution. The Five-Year Plans are conceived in such a way that they can only be carried out with the help of forced labour. One of the

chief aims of Soviet long-term economic planning is the development of those vast and fabulously rich areas of the Soviet Far North, which are entirely or largely unsuitable for human habitation. In these areas there are rich coal seams, oil deposits and gold mines. Their sub-soil also contains copper, nickel and other non-ferrous metals. Their wealth in timber and water power is almost inexhaustible.

All these economic assets of the Soviet Union could not be cheaply and properly exploited if the Soviet State had to rely on freely volunteered labour. The Soviet State would have to pay not only full wage rates but also special living and family allowances, if freely-hired labourers were used for the building of roads and railways or for the development of mining in the Far North. This would result in too great a drain on the state budget. It is thus more expedient to staff the new enterprises in the Arctic regions of Siberia and Northern Europe with convicts and exiles.

This explains why most of the hundred and twenty-odd corrective labour camps known to exist in Russia at the present time are situated in territories where only few people would go of their own free will, and even then only if offered very high wages. Forced labour has, however, also been used outside the Far North and the Far East for all construction works where freely-hired labour would have proved unremunerative. Thus two big Soviet canals, which have been officially described as the 'largest in the world,' have been built almost exclusively by forced labour. The first was opened in 1933 and connected the Baltic with the White Sea. The second was completed in 1937 and linked Moscow with the

Volga River. Both canals were constructed under the direction of Henrikh Yagoda, Russia's supreme police chief of the period. In the case of the Baltic-White Sea Canal not only the rank and file of the canal workers were convicts but also the engineers and technicians in charge of the planning.

Other big accomplishments of forced labour include a railway line over nine hundred miles long built during the war in an area of Northern Russia where prisoners constitute the largest section of the local population. Prisoners were also responsible for the development of an entire goldmining centre in the northern part of the Soviet Far East. Prison labour was likewise used to build several big metallurgical plants in the Urals and prisoners have even staffed cotton farms in Central Asia.

These are only very few examples picked at random. It would take a long time to enumerate all the branches of Soviet economic life in which forced labour has played an important part. Moreover, our knowledge of the Soviet forced labour system is bound to be incomplete. If there is one big iron curtain surrounding the whole of the Soviet Union there is another double iron curtain protecting the secret of the corrective labour camps.



## V

### JUDGES—PROSECUTORS—BARRISTERS



IN describing the Soviet system of justice, we have so far mostly dealt with two institutions—the MVD, with its various ramifications, and the forced labour system. Let us now look at the normal judicial machinery of the USSR, consisting of judges, public prosecutors and barristers.

#### *‘Independence of Judges’*

In Russia these three different categories of servants of the law fulfil tasks which are very different from those which they carry out in non-Communist countries.

According to Article 122 of the Soviet Constitution ‘judges are independent and subject only to the law.’ To the uninitiated this conveys the impression that a Soviet judge occupies the same exalted position as a judge in England, or in any other country where the independence of the judge and of the court is recognised. Nobody is likely to know better than the Soviet judges themselves that their independence is a legal fiction. They have been told time and again by the highest authority that a Soviet criminal court is ‘the conductor of the policy of the party

and the Soviet régime,' and that the constitutional pledge about 'independence of judges' does not mean their independence from politics.

As the official Manual for Peoples' Judges (published in 1949 by the Ministry of Justice) put it, the Soviet judge must serve one cause only—the building of the Communist society—and he must carry out only one policy—that of the Communist Party and of the Soviet Government.

The Soviet judge, in his jurisdiction, is guided not only by the law itself, but also by circulars which the Ministry of Justice issues to him periodically. These ministerial directives inform the judges and the court to which category of crimes they must apply particularly severe repression during a given period. The Ministry of Justice continually impresses on the judges that they must serve not only the fundamental aims of the party, and of the Soviet State, but they must also support every short-term political and economic campaign. In fact, the tasks of courts and judges are, in some respects, similar to the obligations of the local organs of any economic ministry, namely to assist in the fulfilment of the economic plan. This may sound unbelievable, but can only too easily be proved by an example.

Throughout the post-war period Soviet economy suffered from a shortage of timber, and the timber targets of the Five-Year Plan were continually underfulfilled. In this situation the Ministry of Justice issued a circular to the courts and judges reminding them to do their bit for the fulfilment of the timber plan. They were instructed to give priority to cases of evasion of labour and cartage

duties for the timber industry, and of non-fulfilment of timber-felling quotas. Henceforth such cases had to be tried within five days.

All this goes to show that the judge in the Communist State has a very unenviable position. He is no more than an official of the Ministry of Justice. Nevertheless, the Soviet régime takes great pride in its judges, the 'people's judges,' as they are officially called, because they are elected by universal suffrage, and not appointed, as in most 'capitalist countries.'

Elections of judges take place every third year, in the same way as parliamentary and local elections, except that the boundaries of the constituencies are different. The person to be elected judge is nominated by the Communist Party, and occasionally also by the Communist Youth League, trade union branches, and co-operative organisations. On election day the voter has no real choice. All he can do is to give his vote to the one official candidate. He could, of course, spoil his ballot paper and invalidate his vote, but only few people dare to make such a futile gesture of defiance. In addition to the people's judge each constituency elects between fifty and seventy-five 'people's assessors,' who are the Soviet substitute for a jury.

Legal training is not absolutely essential, even for the full-time people's judge. What counts in the first place is his ideological steadfastness, his ability to fight for 'the protection of socialist state property,' for the 'triumph of Communist morality,' and against 'the remnants of capitalism in the minds of the people.' These tasks can be carried out satisfactorily only by a member of the Communist Party.



It is difficult to say how many judges are party men, for Soviet statistics usually lump actual judges and people's assessors together. At the last elections (in 1951) the party allegiance of judges and people's assessors was given separately only in the case of Vilnius (Vilna), the capital of Lithuania. There, eighty-five per cent of all judges had a Communist Party card. It would probably not be wrong to assume that this percentage is typical of the whole of the Soviet Union. Even among the people's assessors, whose court service is limited to ten days per year, there are between forty-five and fifty per cent party members.

It may happen that a judge, who appeared to be reliable at the time of his elections, is not a good Communist in practice, and does not live up to the expectations of the party. It may be that he shows mercy to the enemies of the régime, and to the 'robbers of state property.' In such a case there is no need for the party to wait until the expiration of the three-year election period. Every judge in the Soviet Union can be removed from his post at any time, usually by the group that has chosen him for office, be it the Communist Party or one of its subsidiary organisations.

The directly elected people's judges constitute the lowest level of the Soviet judicial machinery. Both judges and people's assessors of the provincial, territorial and republican courts are elected by the provincial and territorial councils, or by the republican parliaments. The members of the Supreme Court in Moscow are appointed by the Supreme Council of the USSR, on the suggestion of the government.

All the so-called particularly dangerous crimes directed

against the state administration, and all 'major economic crimes' resulting in heavy damage to state property, are expressly exempt from the competence of the people's judges, and, in some cases, even from the competence of the provincial, territorial and republican courts. They are tried in Moscow, unless they are handled by the MVD-MGB.

### *The Agitator in the Court Room*

The fact that we have spoken in some detail about the tasks of the Soviet judge does not mean that he is the main person in the Soviet court. The Public Prosecutor is of much greater importance.

Andrei Vyshinsky, who himself used to be the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Soviet Union, said that the prosecutor was 'an agitator and propagandist of the Soviet régime.' He is, in fact, much more than that. The Soviet Government relies on the Public Prosecutors to exercise a close supervision over the judges and courts. It is the duty of the Public Prosecutor to protest against 'illegal and unsubstantiated' court sentences. In a non-Communist country an 'illegal and unsubstantiated sentence' would be one which manifestly and directly contradicts a law. In Soviet Russia a judge might pass an 'illegal sentence' if he fails to understand the political importance of a law, or if he makes an incorrect political assessment of what a convicted person did.

The scope of the Public Prosecutor's office is not confined to the court. It is generally one of the most important institutions of the Soviet State, and one of the main safeguards of Soviet centralism. A powerful 'Chief Public

Prosecutor' in Moscow appoints Public Prosecutors in all non-Russian republics and provinces. These local Public Prosecutors can veto all measures taken by the various Soviet Republics or Autonomous Soviet Republics and Autonomous Provinces, if they contradict the laws and constitution of the Soviet Union as a whole. The post of a Chief Public Prosecutor of the Soviet Union, or 'Prokuratura,' as it is called in Russian, was created as late as 1933, but since then it has steadily increased in power and prestige. Since 1943 the whole personnel of the 'Prokuratura' has been entitled to wear uniforms with stars and shoulderstraps, and to bear pompous titles.

The hierarchy of the 'Prokuratura' comprises fourteen different steps whereby each of them corresponds to a military rank. A District Public Prosecutor holds a position which is equivalent to that of an army captain; a Provincial Public Prosecutor is equal in rank to a colonel; and the Public Prosecutor of a Union Republic is on the same level as a lieutenant-general. The profession of the 'Public Prosecutor' has, quite naturally, considerable attraction for young people who want to get on in life.

*Counsellor of the defence—'a silly thing to be'*

If, from a Communist point of view, the Public Prosecutor's job is the most respected one, that of a barrister is one of the most unpopular occupations a Soviet citizen can have. This is only too understandable.

Barristers are, by the very nature of their job, servants of the individual, and have therefore no real purpose in a society where the state is all and everything. The



dominating rôle which the Public Prosecutor plays in the Soviet judicial system not only overshadows the judge, but also prevents the barrister from developing any professional abilities. In political trials, for instance, a Soviet counsellor for the defence is not supposed to prove the innocence of the defendant. On the contrary, he is expected to assist the Public Prosecutor, and only to plead, in the extreme case, for extenuating circumstances.

Even highly placed Communist Party officials have admitted that there is something absurd about the profession of a barrister in a Communist State. For instance, the writer, Alexander Fadeyev, who is a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee, hit the nail on the head in his novel, *Young Guard*, when he said—through the mouth of one of his heroes, a member of the Communist Youth League—‘After all, it’s a silly thing to be a counsellor for the defence in one of our courts.’

As everything else in Soviet Russia, the barristers’ profession is collectivised. Private practice of Law has ceased to exist officially since 1930. All barristers must belong to ‘Colleges of Advocates,’ which exist in every province and in every republic, and are subordinate to the Minister of Justice. Each ‘College of Advocates’ supervises in turn the work of a number of legal advice bureaux. Unlike state officials Soviet barristers do not receive a fixed salary, but are remunerated in accordance with the number of legal cases with which they have dealt during a certain period.

The profession of the barrister thus not only carries little prestige, but is also connected with material disadvantages. This explains why the ‘Colleges of Advocates’

are full of people who did not get on in other professions. It is not necessary for a Soviet 'advocate' to be a graduate of a law school and to have undergone any examinations. All that is required from him is 'legal practice.' This strange stipulation accounts for the fact that many people dismissed from the Public Prosecutors' offices for inefficiency, embezzlement and corruption, can become members of the 'Colleges of Advocates.'

The Soviet Press has, in recent years, given many examples of how lawyers practising as barristers have abused their office. According to the official regulations, the client must not remunerate a lawyer directly, but must pay all fees to the legal bureau itself. In practice things have frequently turned out differently. In order to get larger fees lawyers have promised more efficient service to the clients on condition that a special payment was made to them personally. This has led to a 'black market' in legal consultation, and sometimes even to an exploitation of Soviet citizens seeking legal advice, for instance in labour matters.

The 'Colleges of Advocates' are entitled to suspend or expel an advocate for 'unconscientious work' and 'other misconduct.' The colleges seem to have used this prerogative in cases in which counsellors for the defence have tried to protect honestly the interests of defendants who were accused of political crimes. On the other hand, they have not always suppressed the activities of those who committed real offences.

None of the three links of the Soviet judicial machinery—judges, Public Prosecutors, and barristers—is an institution worthy of imitation. This has not prevented

the Communists from introducing them in all satellite countries. They all now have judges who are revocable agents of a totalitarian party, Public Prosecutors who are all-mighty, and barristers without any honourable standing in the new Communist society.



## VI

### RACE RELATIONS— THE POLITICAL ASPECT



To find a just solution to the problem of race relations is a task which the world has still to carry out. In many parts of the earth there are large and small ethnical groups whose human rights are not adequately respected. The country able to solve the problem of ethnic and racial minorities in a satisfactory way would thus render a tremendous service to mankind. It would supply the pattern from which others could learn. Article 123 of the Soviet Constitution claims that Communist Russia is that country. This article has the following wording:

‘Equality of rights of citizens of the USSR, irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life, is an indefeasible law. Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of, or, conversely, the establishment of any direct or indirect privileges for citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, is punishable by law.’

This article of the Constitution means in short that the small nationalities of the Soviet Union have the same

rights as the Russians. This general principle acquires a meaning only if we know what the rights of the Russians are. In the political field they give an *élite* the opportunity to join the Communist Party while the masses of the population may enter the ranks of other Communist organisations, of which the Trade Unions and the Communist Youth League are the most important ones. The equality of the non-Russians with the Russians consists thus in an equal chance to share with the Russian people the institutions of a totalitarian state.

Even this equality of 'un-freedom' is to a certain degree theoretical only, since the peoples of Soviet Asia do not have a fair representation in the most important institutions of the one-party-state. Although the Communists recruit their members from all peoples of the USSR, there can be no doubt that the party is, on the top level, almost exclusively Russian, Slav and European in character. One cannot overlook the fact, for instance, that the 22,000,000 Moslems of the Soviet Union have no representative in the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. The peoples of Soviet Asia are also under-represented in the Soviet Central Government, in the State Planning Committee and in the Soviet High Command.

In suppressing political opposition the Soviet Government has observed in a sinister sense the principle of racial equality laid down in the Constitution. When wiping out anti-Communist forces the Soviet authorities have never discriminated between Russians and Tartars, or between Latvians and Uzbeks. It mattered little what language the opponents of Communism spoke and to

what race they belonged—they were all subject to the same treatment, consisting of imprisonment and deportation, of trial and execution.

From a purely formal point of view there is, therefore, equality between Russians and non-Russians. Politically and morally, however, it is a very different matter whether a predominantly Russian state machinery destroys Russian opposition groups or whether it suppresses nationalist tendencies among Kazakhs, Tartars, or Mongols. The outlawing of Russian opposition by the Moscow Government is an internal Russian affair. The measures which Moscow has carried out against the so-called 'local nationalism' of the non-Russians are indistinguishable from national oppression.

### *Local Nationalism*

The rulers of Soviet Russia have always used the term 'local nationalism' in the widest possible sense. Practically every assertion of national individuality on the part of non-Russians in the political, cultural and economic field has been described as 'local nationalism.' This elastic definition makes it only too comprehensible that a large number of persons belonging to all non-Russian nationalities of the USSR have at one time or another been accused of nationalist leanings. It is a historical fact that the Soviet Government has twice wiped out the national *élite* of all peoples of Central Asia, Trans-Caucasia and all the other non-Russian territories of the Soviet Union. The first category of local national leaders whom the Communist régime exterminated was made up by genuine



nationalists. They opposed Bolshevism with their own political ideals, and rejected the Communist doctrine of class struggle and class hatred. They feared that the small nationalities of the USSR would disintegrate and jeopardize the chances of their survival if they allowed themselves to be split by class differences.

Throughout the twenties and the beginning of the thirties the Soviet régime did away with these nationalist rebels. In their stead a new generation of local leaders was called upon to occupy the commanding posts in the non-Russian Soviet republics. This new leadership of Russia's national minorities consisted of persons who had grown up under the Soviet régime and who had accepted the Marxist-Leninist theory with all its implications. They had, however, remained faithful to their peoples inasmuch as they stood for a fair measure of local self-government within the framework of a Communist Federal State. As convinced federalists they were bound to resent the constant interference of the Soviet Central Government with the affairs of the small nationalities. They expected help from the so-called right-wing opposition in the Communist Party, which opposed the centralistic policy symbolised by Stalin and Molotov.

The annihilation of that opposition during the great purge of 1937 and 1938 had therefore tremendous repercussions even in the remotest corner of the Soviet Empire. Ministers, presidents, party secretaries and countless high officials were dismissed and executed in practically all non-Russian republics and autonomous provinces of the USSR.

*Soviet Genocide*

Until the time of the German invasion of Russia the measures against local nationalism were directed against individuals and against certain classes of the population, but never against peoples as a whole. During the German-Russian war the Soviet Government decided that a people could also be held collectively responsible for the crime of local nationalism and be punished accordingly. The punishment consisted of the wholesale deportation of the ethnic group concerned, and its annihilation as an organised community. This was carried out so indiscriminately that no exception was made, even for Communist Party members belonging to a nationality whose extermination the Kremlin had decided.

The nationalities to whom such a cruel fate was meted out in 1943 and 1944 included the Crimean Tartars, a people of highly skilled agriculturalists who until the end of the nineteenth century, when the Russians conquered their country, had had a prosperous state of their own. Before the war Soviet propaganda had a great deal to say about the cultural and economic development of the Crimean Tartars under the Soviet régime, but to-day these Crimean Tartars figure in no Soviet population statistics and no Soviet text-book on geography dares to mention them. The same is true of other nationalities treated in the same way as Crimean Tartars, such as the Kalmucks, the only Buddhist people living in Europe, and four Moslem peoples of the Northern Caucasus—the Ingush, Balkars, Karachais and Chechens.

The autonomous republics and provinces which the

Soviet Constitution had allotted to these peoples were simply erased from the map. The peoples inhabiting them (except for Russian and other European colonists) were rounded up by Red Army detachments, loaded on cattle trucks, and removed to remote places in Siberia. They were never heard of again and for all practical purposes they have ceased to exist.

The official excuse for these drastic measures was that the peoples concerned had either supported the German invaders or at least had not fought the traitors in their midst. These accusations must be contrasted with Soviet statements during the early part of the war asserting that scores of Kalmucks, Chechens and Ingush had been awarded medals and orders for acts of bravery. The harsh measures which the Soviet Government took against these half dozen small nationalities, totalling over one million men, women and children, would not be justified even if the official charges against them had been true.

There is no reason why these peoples should have fully identified themselves with Russia's war. After all, the tribes of the North Caucasus region as well as the Crimean Tartars had resented the persecution of religion by the Communist régime. They had also suffered heavily from the compulsory collectivisation of agriculture, and from many other coercive measures which the régime had introduced during the inter-war period.

### *A White Soviet Far East*

The doom of the six small nationalities was not only an event important in itself. It was also a clear warning



to other peoples of the Soviet Union that no constitutional safeguards would protect them if they were ever disloyal to the Communist State. It was more or less accidental that the deportation measures of the régime hit peoples like the Kalmucks and Chechens. They might have affected other nationalities just as well. In case of a Japanese attack for instance the Soviet régime might have charged with treason the peoples of the Russian Far East in the same way as it had denounced the peoples of the North Caucasus for pro-German sympathies. This is the more likely as the Soviet Government had taken, even in peacetime, its precautions against peoples of the yellow race living in the Russian Pacific coastal areas. Suspicions about these peoples prompted Moscow to practice, from the thirties, a policy of a white Soviet Far East.

While the Soviet Government pumped as many European colonists as possible into the Far Eastern territories of the USSR, Chinese and Koreans had to leave them. Thousands of Koreans who, either under the Czarist régime, or in the early years of Soviet power, had immigrated into the Vladivostok region were transplanted to Central Asia. Many members of the Chinese minority who had been living peacefully in various Russian Far Eastern cities were forced to return to their homeland. Consequently the number of Chinese inhabiting Soviet Russia decreased by two-thirds between 1926 and 1939 according to the official census figures.

The policy of the white Soviet Far East remained in force even after the end of the war. Thus the Soviet authorities expelled 400,000 Japanese from Sakhalin and

the Kurile Islands when Russia annexed these territories in 1945. Hastily recruited Russian colonists took the place of the Japanese settlers.

What Asiatic peoples had to endure under the Soviet régime, European nations had to suffer too. During the last ten years alone the Russian Communist Government have deported from their homes large numbers of Latvians and Estonians, Poles and Finns, as well as the entire German minority of the USSR. Soviet Russia's actions against national minorities do not therefore result from racial prejudice. Vexations inflicted on this or that ethnical group are always guided by political considerations and aim at protecting the Communist dictatorship against the nationalist heresy of the non-Russian peoples whether they are Asiatics or Europeans.

One aspect of Russia's approach to racial problems can be discussed only in theory. The crucial question of 'White versus Black' does not arise in the Soviet Union in view of the non-existence of a negro population in that country. One may nevertheless ask what attitude the Soviet Government would take towards the black race if a negro minority, several million people strong, were living in the USSR. It is a fair assumption that the Communist régime would treat a negro minority in exactly the same way as other non-Russian peoples. The Soviet Government would not introduce any colour bar, but it would arrest and deport negro leaders whenever they conducted, in the Communist view, a nationalistic policy. It would incite the poor negroes against the more well-to-do ones. It would sow distrust among negro workmen against negro intellectuals. It would ridicule as reactionary

romanticism almost every reference to negro traditions. In other words, Communism would respect the human dignity and the national individuality neither of the negroes nor of any other people and race throughout the world.



## VII

### RACE RELATIONS— THE CULTURAL ASPECT



THE fight against illiteracy is not a matter which concerns one political party or the supporters of a specific ideology alone. Peoples and governments of all continents are interested in this problem. It is natural therefore that the nations of the world should try to benefit from each other's experience in spreading the knowledge of the alphabet. Had Communist Russia, for instance, made a useful contribution to the world fight against illiteracy it would be wrong to disregard the Soviet example.

#### *The Fight against Illiteracy*

If we were to interview a Soviet official about the success of the Russian literacy campaign he would most probably present us with a set of figures and add proudly, 'judge for yourself!' The figures which we would receive would be very impressive indeed. They would prove that millions of people have learned the alphabet under the Soviet régime. They would also show that in 1939, at the time of the last census, four out of five Soviet citizens were literate. This is a very remarkable achievement, if we consider that among persons over fifty years of age

only forty per cent knew how to write and to read shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War. Although the number of literate persons was higher in the Russian than in the non-Russian territories of the USSR, less than one-third of the population was illiterate even in the most backward Central Asian Soviet Republic.

The official figures, if accepted as correct, show that Russian Communists accomplished a great civilising mission, provided that they carried it out in a philanthropic spirit. The history of the Soviet literacy campaigns shows, however, that humanitarian motives played no part in the Communist mass education campaign. The first decree which the Soviet Government issued in December, 1919, on the fight against illiteracy stated flatly that the aim was 'to enable the entire population to participate consciously in the political life of the country.' Literacy was thus intended to make it possible for the peoples of the USSR to read Communist propaganda literature, and to work in Communist organisations which monopolise the 'political life' of the country. Since the spread of literacy was to serve in the first place the political interests of the régime and not the cultural needs of the people, literacy classes had to give preferential treatment to Communists over non-Communists, and to workers over peasants.

A statement issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party in May, 1929, declared specifically:

'In the work of liquidating illiteracy in the eastern republics and provinces, and among the national minorities, particular attention must be paid to the priority of rendering literate members of the Party and Young

Communist League, and then industrial workers and people actively participating in the work of local government bodies and of co operatives.'

### *Three Alphabets in Twenty Years*

The methods and the spirit in which the Soviet literacy campaign has been carried out have reduced the value of the official Russian literacy statistics. Soviet cultural policy made them almost completely meaningless. At least as far as the non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union are concerned the Russian Communist Government has taken away with the one hand what it had given with the other. Millions of people in the Soviet Union, it is true, have learned the alphabet, but the régime rendered the alphabet useless by introducing drastic reforms. Governmental decrees compelled most non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union to abandon the Arabic, the Mongol and other alphabets and to adopt instead first the Latin and later the Russian script. This dual operation—also called the 'alphabetic revolution'—was implemented between 1925 and 1940, and constituted one of the most fateful events in the cultural life of the non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union during the inter-war period.

Lenin himself had described the latinisation of the oriental alphabets as the 'Great Revolution in the East.' There was a great deal of truth in this definition. The Soviet Government carried out a revolutionary act when it forced dozens of peoples to throw overboard their alphabet and all those ancient traditions which is symbolised.



The idea of the latinisation of the Arabic alphabet was no Communist invention. It had first emerged in the nineteenth century, and in our time Kemalist Turkey took the first step; but the introduction of the Latin script in Turkey and in the Soviet Union was by no means the same thing. In Turkey latinisation was enacted by a Turkish party backed by a large section of the Turkish people. In the Soviet Union a Russian Central Government imposed the latinisation on Turkic and other nationalities. The latinisation offered the Communist Party of the Soviet Union a welcome opportunity to inflict a deadly blow on the cultural traditions of practically all Asiatic peoples of the Soviet Union. By changing over from one alphabet to another the Communist régime could eliminate from the existing literatures everything that was, from the Soviet point of view, either useless or dangerous—particularly everything of a religious nature. Only books which did not conflict with Communist ideology were reprinted in the new script. All other works were consigned to oblivion in oriental archives and could be understood no longer by the rising generation.

A big bureaucratic machinery operating from Moscow—the All-Union Committee for the New Alphabet—was in charge of the latinisation campaign. It had to overcome considerable resistance and sabotage, for most non-Russian nationalities clung almost fanatically to their ancient scripts. Only small primitive tribes, devoid of cultural traditions, accepted the 'Alphabetic Revolution' without demur.

In 1935 an official Soviet announcement stated that the transition to the new alphabet had been successfully

concluded on the whole. By that time Latin alphabets had been created for sixty-nine nationalities. Millions of people became literate in the new script, in which dozens of millions of books were published. Very soon, however, it became clear that all the tremendous efforts connected with the latinisation had been wasted. The Kremlin, which in the thirties had come more and more under the spell of Russian nationalist ideas completely reversed its attitude, almost as soon as the Latin alphabet had been accepted by all concerned. The Soviet leaders suddenly feared that the Latin characters, once loudly advertised as the 'Alphabet of Lenin' and of the October Revolution, might constitute a link between the peoples of the East and the peoples of Europe and America.

In 1939 the Communist Party of the Soviet Union ordered therefore that all peoples who in the twenties had accepted the Latin script under duress had to abandon it again. By a stroke of the pen the nationalities of Central Asia, or Siberia and the Far North were once again reduced to a state of near-illiteracy, and had to learn a new alphabet which was based on the Russian script. At the same time the change-over from one alphabet to another meant that the entire literature published during the first twenty-two years of the Soviet régime had become useless for a new generation. Soviet cultural policy had to start once again from the beginning.

### *Linguistic Reforms*

The purpose of the Soviet literacy campaign has been defeated not only by the reform of the alphabet but also

by the changes which the régime has frequently introduced into the vocabulary and orthography of many non-Russian languages. Stalin himself has repeatedly pointed out that the final aim of Communism is the establishment of one single world language. Pending the realisation of this very distant aim the Russian Communists have tried at least to diminish the differences existing between the various languages of the Soviet Union.

This levelling out process was entirely at the cost of the non-Russian languages, which, during the past twenty-five years, have had to absorb an ever-increasing number of Russian or half-Russian foreign words. The motive behind these linguistic reforms is the fear of the Soviet régime that local nationalists might use their languages for anti-Communist manoeuvres. They might, for instance, distort the meaning of such vital political terms as 'dictatorship,' 'Soviet,' 'proletariat' or '*bourgeoisie*,' if they were allowed to choose native words for them. For example, the Buryato-Mongols of Eastern Siberia used a word for 'dictatorship' which meant, if translated verbatim, 'government maintaining itself in power by violence.' This might have been all right from the Soviet point of view if it referred only to a foreign dictatorship, but the same word was applied to the dictatorship of the proletariat existing in Russia. The use of the Mongol term thus meant an open attack on the Soviet régime. In this and other similar cases it was opportune therefore to replace the native expression by the Russian equivalent.

There have also been cases in which the régime objected not only to this or that word in a non-Russian language but also to the structure of a language as a whole. Thus the literary language of the Turkmenians, the people



living to the east of the Caspian Sea, was twice branded as anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist, and the linguistic experts who had compiled grammars and vocabularies were denounced as wreckers.

The first 'counter-revolutionary' Turkmenian language had to be abandoned because it was, in the official view, the language of a feudal epoch. The second anti-Leninist Turkmenian language had to be dropped because it was too much influenced by the orthography of Turkish as used in Turkey. Only a third version of the Turkmenian language found the approval of the Communist leaders. All literature in the 'wrong' languages had to be destroyed.

### *The Literature of Ethnic Minorities*

Intolerance towards the alphabets and languages of the non Russian peoples is only one reason why the liquidation of illiteracy in Soviet Russia has not resulted in the intellectual life which would have developed in a free country. The Communist censorship and the state ownership of all printing presses and publishing houses are other factors which have obstructed the genuine development of culture in the USSR. The existence of a state monopoly for the publication of literature enables the Communist Party to determine what the various peoples of the Soviet Union may be allowed to read.

Let us throw a quick glance at the officially approved reading matter which reaches the non-Russian Soviet citizen. Roughly half of it openly serves political purposes or is connected with the fulfilment of the current economic plans. Much of this printed material consists of translations from the works of Stalin, Lenin, and Marx, as well

as of speeches by prominent Communist leaders. This does not mean that the remaining half of Soviet literature is non-political. As a matter of fact, most novels, plays and poems also serve Communist propaganda needs; for the régime demands from all authors that they must actively support Communism. It is not enough if their works show a mere absence of anti Soviet tendencies. Thus the writers of the Central Asian Republics are expected to propagate the increase of cotton production, to fight against religious Moslem customs, and to show how successful collectivisation of cattlebreeding has been.

Only a comparatively small part of the output in books and pamphlets is devoted to literature in the true sense, to a literature which genuinely raises the cultural level of the people to which it is destined. This category includes carefully selected translations from Russian and foreign classics, collections of folklore and historic novels by contemporary authors. Folk tales, folk epics and historical novels, too, must be adapted to the interests of the régime. So a non-Russian writer must not refer to the past of his nation in too enthusiastic terms for this could be interpreted as an 'idealisation of feudalism.' He must be careful, in particular, not to pay tribute to any ruler of his people who had waged war against the Russians for fear of being charged with professing *bourgeois* nationalist views.

The conclusion to be drawn from all these facts is only too apparent. The spreading of literacy in Soviet Russia as far as it is real and not statistical only, has failed to lead to the intellectual treasures of the world but has led, instead, into an impasse. Instead of making the life

of the individual and of whole peoples richer, literacy in the Soviet Union is only a means of one-sided indoctrination, an instrument by which the Communist State limits the horizon of millions of human beings instead of enlarging it.



## VIII

# RELIGION UNDER COMMUNISM



IN 1933 a conference of Soviet linguistic scholars was held in Moscow and discussed the question whether the word 'God' could not be excluded altogether from the vocabulary of one of the languages of the USSR. After a long discussion the majority of the conference delegates decided that the word 'God' was needed for conducting anti-religious propaganda and therefore had to be retained in Soviet dictionaries.

### *'Freedom of Religious Worship'*

This little episode is characteristic of the irreconcilable conflict between Communism and religion. It must be said in favour of the Communists that they have not made any secret of this fundamental contradiction. The phrase of Karl Marx, 'Religion is opium to the people,' is one of the corner-stones of the Communist creed and so is Stalin's statement 'All religion is contrary to science.'

But let us leave theory and look at the factual situation of the Church in the first Communist state of the world—in Soviet Russia. We must distinguish between two periods in the development of the relations between Church and State in the Soviet Union, a period of per-

secution and a period of relative tolerance. An account of atrocities which the Communist régime is said to have committed against the churches in the years of active anti-religious terror would fill many volumes. Not all the reports which the Press of the world has published on that subject are necessarily correct, but many of them are true and have been confirmed by the Soviet Government.

Seen in retrospect such acts as executions and deportations of priests are important only for one reason. They have strengthened the determination of the believers to remain faithful to the creed in which they have been born.

No Russian Communist is likely to deny that the first round in the battle of Communism versus Religion ended with a clear victory for the latter. The full extent of the victory can only be measured by the effort which the régime had made in its anti-religious campaign. Vast amounts of energy and money had been spent in order to destroy the belief in God throughout that sixth of the globe which had become the Soviet Union. A large part of the state machinery was engaged in the fight against religion, and the régime was extremely ingenious in devising methods to render the exercise of religious cults impossible without ever resorting to a formal ban.

The Communist State did not abolish priesthood, but for a long time it did not allow priests to live in large towns. It did not forbid religious services as such but it abolished Sunday as a day of rest, temporarily at least.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sunday ceased to be a day of rest in 1929 when the Soviet Government introduced the 'uninterrupted working week.' This meant that some people had to rest on Monday, others on Tuesday, others on Wednesday and so on. This staggering of the rest day led to utter confusion and disorganisation of family life. Within a short time it became so unpopular that it had to be abandoned. The

Theoretically there has not been any discrimination against believers, but, in practice, church-goers were not, and still are not, eligible for more important posts, including those of officials, teachers and university professors.

The Soviet Constitution itself does not try to conceal the precarious situation in which all religious bodies of the USSR find themselves. Religion is mentioned only once in the Soviet Constitution in its Article 124 which recognises 'freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda for all citizens.' The article seems to have been drafted with deliberate care, it does not guarantee 'freedom of religion' but only 'freedom of religious worship.' The Soviet authorities have given the most narrow and most literal interpretation to this part of the Constitution. They have not admitted any religious activity which is not directly connected with religious service.

This factual limitation of religious freedom in the Soviet Union has been elaborated by a Soviet Law of April 8, 1929, which is still in force to-day. The law says that religious bodies must not organise special meetings for children, youth and women, nor must they hold any other meetings outside the religious services, nor open libraries or reading rooms, nor provide medical or material aid for their members. The Churches must in particular not conduct any religious propaganda, while anti-religious propaganda is expressly protected by the Constitution.

'uninterrupted working week' was replaced by a six-day-week which likewise eliminated the Sunday. Rest days were fixed for the 6th, 12th, 18th, 24th, and 30th of each month. In 1940 the Soviet Government reverted to the seven-day-week for economic reasons. Sunday came into its own again after having ceased to exist for over eleven years.



*The League of Militant Godless*

Between 1925 and 1941 this propaganda was carried out by a big organisation operating under the characteristic name of 'League of Militant Godless.' The League was in reality a department of the Communist Party and its chief, Emelyan Yaroslavsky, the official biographer of Stalin, was at the same time a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee. The League propagated atheism on a very large scale. It worked among the school youth, in trade unions, in villages and in the Red Army. It spared no religious group and was equally hostile to Christ, Mohammed and Buddha, who were the targets of blasphemous posters and of vulgar cartoons in the atheistic Press.

All pronouncements of the League as well as its vast literature made it clear that the cleavage between Communism and Islam or between Communism and Buddhism was as big as the gap separating the Communist Party from any of the Christian Churches. In co-operation with the state authorities the League not only conducted a violent campaign against Islam as such but also against the observance of all customs based on Moslem religious law. In its fight against Buddhism the League even went beyond the borders of Soviet Russia proper. It helped in the setting up of anti-religious organisations in the Soviet satellite state of Outer Mongolia whose population had always been greatly attached to the Buddhist faith.

The League pretended to fight what it called religious prejudices by scientific means, and some of its leaders may indeed have had serious intentions in this respect.

The local branches of the League, however, cared little about science and frequently threatened and terrorised the believers. Sure of the passive or active support of the state organs, they were able to enforce by administrative methods the closing of churches, mosques and synagogues, of Christian monasteries and Buddhist lamaseries, or their transformation into anti-religious museums. The League was particularly active at the time of big religious holidays, during which the League used to organise anti-religious exhibitions and processions. It held anti-Easter and anti-Christmas meetings in the Christian areas of the USSR, and staged anti-Kurbam Bairam manifestations in Moslem territories. The chiefs of the anti-religious campaign also tried to supplement every big initiative of the Soviet Government by a special anti-religious action. Thus, to parallel the Five-Year Plan for national economy the League proclaimed a Five-Year Plan for anti-religious propaganda. The collectivisation of Soviet agriculture was to be accompanied by the de-Christianisation of the Russian countryside.

All this gigantic offensive led nowhere. The believers, it is true, did not put up any active resistance to the atheist campaign, but showed by their passive attitude that they disapproved of it. Many people went on saying their prayers, they kept the famous Russian ikons in their houses, they gave to their children a modicum of religious education and they also assisted financially the persecuted priests. In 1940, the twenty-third year of the Soviet régime, the organ of the League of Militant Godless, the review *Antireligioznik*, estimated that probably more than half, perhaps two-thirds of the Russian village population still believed in God. Also in the towns there

was still a large section of believers, even if the League classified the majority of the adult population as atheist. However, most of these alleged atheists refused to participate actively in the work of the League, which therefore declined from year to year.

### *The Orthodox Church*

In view of the obvious failure of the anti-religious campaign the Soviet Government decided to embark on a new policy, a policy of qualified tolerance. Since it was not possible to do away with religious beliefs, the régime wanted at least to use the Churches for its own purposes. This new development was accelerated by the war. The Communist State needed the Churches as an ally against Hitlerite Germany and as a means to contact the large masses of believers in the democratic world. In this situation the League of Militant Godless ceased to exist and all atheist periodicals stopped publication. The Orthodox Church, as the largest of all religious communities, benefited most from the tactical change in Soviet policy towards religion. It was allowed to elect a patriarch—the last one had died in 1925—and it was permitted to set up an efficient church administration and to train its priests in a proper way.

From the official Communist point of view the Orthodox Church has a great advantage over the other religious communities of the Soviet Union. It does not look towards any foreign ecclesiastical body for guidance and inspiration. Firmly rooted in Russian historic traditions, the Orthodox Church is also less internationally minded than most of the other Churches represented in



the Soviet Union. The Communist Government is thus in a position to exercise much greater control over Orthodox Christians than over Moslems, Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists and Buddhists living in the USSR.

The promotion of the Orthodox Church to the rank of an official Church in the atheist state may seem strange but it is a logical consequence of the dual Communist and Russian character of the Soviet régime. As a Communist Government the Soviet régime is persecuting all Churches, but, as a Russian Government, it wants to see Moscow transformed into a big Church centre, into a rival Rome. A special Council for the Affairs of the Orthodox Church working under the direction of atheist officials has assisted the Patriarch of Moscow and the Orthodox Church Government in establishing a certain supervision over the Orthodox Churches in other states. Despite the general ban on foreign travelling existing in the Soviet Union for private persons, Russian Orthodox Bishops have been encouraged in recent years to go abroad. They were allowed to visit satellite states and various countries in the Middle East and in Western Europe to keep in touch with Orthodox Communities there and to enhance the prestige of the Moscow Patriarch.

In 1948 the Moscow Patriarch was even granted permission to hold a big church conference in the Soviet capital. The Orthodox Church had to pay for this favour and had to issue two sharp statements challenging the rest of the Christian world, one directed against the Vatican and the other against the World Council of Churches.

*Non-Orthodox Churches*

While there is a special state office for the Orthodox, one single state board, the 'Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults' looks after the other denominations of the Soviet Union. Most of them enjoy a far lesser degree of tolerance than does the Orthodox Church. The 'Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults' has to tackle amongst other things the problem of the small Christian sects which are scattered all over the USSR. The régime has always considered them as rather dangerous, paradoxically enough not because of their hostility towards Communism but because they manifested friendliness towards it. Some sects, including the Russian Baptists, have affirmed indeed that Communism and Christianity are identical.

The Bolshevik Party has always fought this assertion and is still fighting it now. It believes that enthusiasm shown by some Russian Christians for Communism, far from being commendable, creates confusion in the minds of Soviet citizens. In order to make it easier to check on the activities of the sects the Soviet Government has persuaded several of them to amalgamate with the Baptists and to set up a rigid centralistic organisation, the All-Union Council of Baptists. This council has divided the whole Soviet Union into seventy districts. Each district has a chief presbyter who supervises the ordinary presbyters within his jurisdiction. All presbyters must be registered with the Soviet authorities.

Then there are the Roman Catholics who form the majority of the population in one Soviet Republic

(Lithuania) and substantial minorities in two others (Latvia and Byelorussia). Their situation has been extremely precarious throughout the post-war period. The Soviet Press and radio have not only attacked the Vatican and the Pope but have denounced the entire Roman Catholic Church as 'an organisation for spying and other subversive activities.' This was bound to affect the Roman Catholic clergy in the Soviet Union and even the individual believer. The Soviet anti-Vatican propaganda reached its culminating point in an exhibition which was organised in Leningrad in 1951 under the title 'The Vatican in the service of imperialism.' It was held in the Kazansky Sobor, a famous Orthodox cathedral which is now used as an anti-religious museum.

With the 22,000,000 Soviet Moslems the régime has dealt similarly as with the Roman Catholics, it has done its best to cut them off from their co religionaries in other countries. Pilgrimages to Mecca were either forbidden or limited to tiny groups of carefully selected Soviet citizens of Moslem faith. Arabic, the holy language of the Koran which serves as lingua franca to all Moslem peoples, is not allowed to be taught in the Soviet school.

### *'Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge'*

During the war there was a genuine armistice between the Churches and the régime. After the war the régime wanted to have the best of two worlds. It wanted the blessing of the Churches for its political actions, especially their support for the signing of the so-called 'peace appeals.' At the same time the state tried to reduce the



influence of the Churches by a nation-wide anti-religious campaign. The new campaign, it is true, is more discreet than the crude agitation of the League of Militant Godless during the pre-war period. It is conducted by an organisation which calls itself the 'All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge.'

The Society, which was founded in 1947, consists of Soviet intellectuals who pledged themselves to deliver not less than two public lectures a year. In 1951 the Society had 300,000 members working in 4,000 city and district branches and in over 14,000 lecture centres including 5,200 in collective farms. During the first four years of its existence the members of the Society delivered 1,875,000 lectures of which half were devoted to Marxist-Leninist theory and to the explanation of Soviet internal and foreign policy.

The Society has a special anti-religious sub-committee which until 1950 had prepared the syllabus for over thirty lectures which were delivered in all the major languages of the Soviet Union. They cover every aspect of atheism and cater for the supporters of all denominations. At the same time special efforts are also made to combat religion among the rising generation. The Communist Youth League is leading that fight and is watching over its 16,000,000 members who on no account must attend church services, take sacraments or participate in any religious activity.

Of course there is no reason why the anti-religious campaign should have been stopped. In Communist Russia religious tolerance means only the absence of active persecution, but the fight against religion is going

on nevertheless. There is agreement among all leading Communists that the aim of Communism will be achieved only when the last believer has abandoned his faith in Christ, Mohammed or Buddha and has adopted instead the materialist philosophy of Marx, Lenin and Stalin.

## IX

# COMMUNIST EDUCATION



THERE is no other institution in the USSR which has been the object of so many and so contradictory experiments as the school. Almost immediately after they came to power, Russia's Communist leaders decided that the Soviet régime must create an entirely new system of education. They had no exact ideas as to what the new education was to be. They knew only that they wanted a school entirely different from the schools of Czarist Russia and also from the schools of all non-Communist countries. Thus, for a number of years Soviet Russia became a huge educational laboratory. School discipline was thrown overboard, homework and examinations were abolished, and teachers were deprived of their authority. The schools were run by special school councils on which the pupils were represented. At the same time, the school curriculum underwent drastic and revolutionary changes; the main stress was put on technical subjects and on the ABC of Communism, the so-called 'political grammar.'

Many, if not most, of the Soviet school reforms reflected the Utopian radicalism of a revolutionary period and could not last. In the early thirties Soviet leadership was forced to admit that the Communist school had been unable to turn out really educated and disciplined citizens.



After having spent fifteen years in destroying the old educational system the Soviet Government spent the next fifteen years in restoring, in the field of pedagogy, most of those conditions which revolutionary zeal had abolished. Gradually rigid discipline was re-established, strict examinations were re-introduced, the co-education of boys and girls was dropped, the curriculum assumed a more general character, and greater heed was paid to foreign languages, geography, history and literature.

The régime did away not only with everything that had been inadequate in its early school experiments but also with some of the positive achievements of revolutionary educational policy. These included the principle of free education which had been a colossal accomplishment and had given Soviet Russia a considerable advantage over many other countries. The Soviet Constitution of 1936 still pledged the government to give free education in all schools, colleges and universities.

In 1940, however, this article of the Constitution was changed. At present most Soviet parents have to pay if they want their children to attend secondary schools, let alone to study at universities.

Although the Soviet educational system has been in a permanent state of flux ever since 1917 there is one decisive point where it has remained faithful to its original mission. To-day, just as in the years following the revolution, the Soviet Russian school is first and foremost an instrument of Communist indoctrination.

The Communist Party has never abandoned the decision taken in 1919, at its eighth Congress, which said that the school must aim at bringing up a generation capable of finally achieving Communism. In order to reach this

objective the Russian teacher must impress upon his pupils that the Communist Party is the supreme authority, not only in matters concerning the political and economic life of the country but also in regard to all problems of science and art.

### *What Soviet Children Learn*

To get an idea of what Soviet education is like we have to throw a quick glance at the textbooks in use in Soviet schools, at instructions which the Ministry of Education issues to the teachers, and at the school curriculum. From this material it can be seen that one of the most important tasks of the teachers is to instil into Russian boys and girls a strong feeling of hatred against the real and alleged enemies of the régime. As early as in the fourth form Soviet children are acquainted with such terms as 'instigators of war,' and 'Fascist agents.' This last category includes all prominent Russian Communists who have opposed Stalin at one time or another.

Teaching in the Soviet school is continuously adapted to the tactical changes of the Soviet Government both in the sphere of foreign policy and on the Soviet home-front. This applies particularly to the teaching of history, geography and literature. Thus, a few years ago, teachers were still allowed to pay a qualified tribute to the wartime co operation between Russia and the Western Powers. To-day they must stress that the USSR and the West have always pursued different war and peace aims, even if they seemed to fight on the same side.

Ancient and mediaeval, as well as modern, history

serves as a vehicle for the spread of political propaganda. A book with instructions for teachers which the Soviet Pedagogical Academy published in 1948 said, for instance, that the teacher must devote considerable attention to the description of those just wars of liberation which were fought in antiquity. When dealing with mediaeval history the teacher, according to the same instructions, must show that Fascism had its roots in the Middle Ages. He must underline in this connection the alleged existence of Fascist tendencies in Britain, the United States and Western Germany.

Within the general Communist indoctrination of the Soviet children the Stalin Cult plays a very prominent part. The word 'Stalin' is one of the first which the Soviet school-child is taught to spell. Stalin is the hero of the first poems which the pupil learns by heart, and of the first stories which he manages to read. Later the pupil learns that all achievements of the Soviet Union are due to the initiative and leadership of Stalin.

The history of the USSR as told in the Soviet school is largely identical with an account of the life and deeds of Generalissimo Stalin. A textbook of Social Science for elementary and secondary schools may serve as an illustration of the importance of the Stalin Cult in the Soviet school. One-third of the whole textbook is devoted to Stalin; it contains eight different pictures of the supreme Soviet leader and its various chapters carry such titles as 'Stalin and the Red Army,' 'Stalin and the National Question,' 'Stalin and the Industrialisation of the USSR,' 'Stalin and the Collectivisation of Agriculture,' and so on. The book from which these chapter headings are taken



was published before the war. Since then adulation of Stalin has become even more pronounced both inside and outside school.

### *Communist Morality Teaching*

As Russia is an atheist state there is, of course, no place for religion in the school curriculum. Instead of religious teaching the Russian children receive instruction in Communist morality. A statement which the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued after the war defines the task of Communist morality teaching in eight points which apparently are to take the place of the Ten Commandments.

In the light of this statement teaching of morality is focused on the correct relationship between the individual and the Communist State. Its primary objectives are 'devotion to the cause of Communism' and 'ideological steadfastness.'

Next in importance ranks education in Soviet patriotism, in the respect of Socialist property and in Communist relationship to work. The principles 'thou shalt not steal' and 'thou shalt not kill,' as far as they refer to the property and life of private citizens, are not excluded from Communist morality teaching but are of subordinate importance. The instructions of the Communist Central Committee lump these and other commandments together in their eighth and last point which deals with the 'respect of the rules of Socialist community life.'

Communist morality teaching, which is only a different name for political propaganda, is not a monopoly of the school; parents are expected to make a contribution as

well. Thus it is considered a duty of the parents to organise special family celebrations on the occasion of the so called revolutionary holidays such as November 7 (October Revolution anniversary day) or May 1 (Labour Day). The Soviet Pedagogical Academy went so far as to issue detailed recommendations as to how to prepare these family parties, which are to replace the celebration of Christmas and Easter.

### *The Young Pioneers*

As the Communist régime cannot always count on the wholehearted support of the parents it has created a special organisation supervising Soviet children outside school hours—'The Young Pioneers.' The Pioneer organisation has 19,000,000 members; it embraces children between the ages of nine and fifteen.

The Pioneers do many things which Boy Scouts all over the world do. They make excursions, play games, and collect butterflies and stamps. These manifold non-political activities do not prevent the Pioneer organisation from being at the same time a training ground for Communism. A young Pioneer is taught, above all, one important thing, namely, that the interests of the state must always prevail over the interests of his own family. To show the young boy and the young girl the true meaning of this principle the Soviet propaganda machinery created a nation-wide hero whose example the Pioneers have to follow. His name is Pavlik Morozov, leader of a Pioneer detachment in a small village in the Urals.

Pavlik was the ideal Communist child, he denounced his relatives to the police for anti-state activities. He gave

evidence even against his own father, a village elder who was sentenced to ten years of penal servitude for opposing the collectivisation of agriculture. One day the boy was found murdered in the forest and the official version said that members of his own family had killed him.

Pavlik Morozov's picture is exhibited in children's clubs throughout the USSR, monuments have been erected in his honour and poems and books have been published to immortalise his feats.

This leads us to yet another means by which the Communist Government is trying to influence the minds of its youngest citizens—children's literature. The writing of children's books is not left to chance, a special commission of the Union of Soviet Writers sees to it that Soviet children are provided not only with fairy tales and adventure stories, but also with biographies of prominent Soviet leaders and famous Russian Generals, descriptions of battles and booklets on Russian inventions and discoveries.

Apart from books, the Government produces for the children also journals and newspapers of which the *Pioneer Pravda* is the most important one. This newspaper is exactly what its name suggests, a miniature edition of *Pravda*, the central organ of the Communist Party. Like its prototype, *Pioneer Pravda* publishes important party and government announcements on the front page, and stories attacking the Western world in the inside. In compiling the material for their newspaper the editors of *Pioneer Pravda* seem to be little concerned with the fact that the majority of their readers are below the age of thirteen.



*The Komsomol*

The triple indoctrination campaign carried out by the Soviet régime with the help of the school, the Pioneer organisation and children's literature is only a prelude. As soon as the Pioneer reaches the age of fourteen or fifteen his political education enters a new phase. He may then join the Communist Youth League, the Komsomol, which puts the indoctrination of the Soviet boys and girls on a higher level. The systematic study of the 'classics of Marxism-Leninism,' and of the 'Short History of the All-Union Communist Party' starts. In 1949 alone the Komsomol organised as many as 230,000 circles for the study of Marxist-Leninist theory in which millions of youngsters had to participate.

In addition, the Komsomol has always done its utmost to educate the young people of the Soviet Union in a militant spirit. It has played an outstanding part in building up the Red Navy and Red Air Force. It has popularised parachute jumping among the young Soviet citizens. In the post-war period it has given every conceivable help to a new organisation, 'DOSAAF,' or, in full, 'Voluntary Society Assisting the Army, Air Force and Navy.'

The Komsomol received very little gratitude for all it did for the ideological, political and military consolidation of the Soviet régime. Since its foundation in 1918, when it had in all 22,000 members, the Communist Youth League has grown tremendously in number, but its political influence has had no corresponding increase. One might even say that the small nucleus of 1918 was

politically a more important body than the gigantic mass organisation which the Komsomol is to-day.

Originally the Komsomol was a real political force, and each of the rival groups struggling for power within the party did its best to get the League on its side. But from year to year the privileges of the Komsomol were curtailed. As early as 1926 the party made it clear to the Communist youth leaders that the Komsomol was no partner, not even a junior partner, but only a subsidiary organisation, which had to carry out the orders of the Bolshevik Central Committee.

In 1938 the party inflicted its final, devastating blow on the Komsomol, and secured its absolute leadership over the Youth League. The leaders of the League, including the Secretary-General, Kosarev, were removed from their posts. Many regional secretaries of the organisation were put into prison, or even executed. The League itself underwent a total reorganisation. All power was henceforth vested in an army of 30,000 permanent officials, and the ordinary member ceased to count.

In April, 1949, the Komsomol held its eleventh congress. It was the first one to take place since 1936. The composition of the delegates showed to what extent the Communist Youth League had ceased to be a genuine organisation of the younger generation, and had become a bureaucratic apparatus dominating the youth. Less than one-fifth of the congress delegates were young workers and peasants. The majority were party and state officials, and full-time secretaries of the Komsomol itself. The latter alone accounted for forty per cent of all delegates.

In the Communist Youth League the young Soviet

citizen may remain until the age of twenty-six. One might think that five or six years of training in the Pioneer organisation, followed by ten to eleven years of active membership in the Communist Youth League, would achieve that complete standardisation of brains to which the Soviet Government aspires.

There are quite a number of indications, however, that the Soviet régime has not succeeded in producing that one hundred per cent totalitarian man, who is immune from all outside influences. The Soviet undergraduates, in particular, have given, in recent years, frequent cause for complaint to the Communist Party and Communist Youth League. They have betrayed, for instance, too great an interest in foreign science and literature, while paying too little attention to the contemporary Soviet period.<sup>1</sup> Also, the less educated young people, young workers and peasants, have occasionally shown that all efforts at indoctrination by the régime have failed to affect their innermost thoughts. Indeed, most of the Russian deserters who have fled into Western Europe in recent years belong to the generation which has been brought up under the Soviet régime.

<sup>1</sup> An article which *Literaturnaya Gazeta* published on October 15, 1949, was particularly revealing in this respect. It analysed the contents of 394 theses which Soviet students of literature had registered with the Lenin Library in Moscow. 158 theses dealt with foreign literature including such 'reactionaries' as the French writer Dumas-Pere and the German lyricist Rilke. 212 theses were devoted to Russian pre-revolutionary literature and only 24 to Soviet writers and poets.



## X

### THE PRESS



LENIN said of a Communist and Soviet Press that it must be a collective propagandist and agitator, as well as a collective organiser. This definition to which the Soviet régime has always faithfully adhered, explains why Soviet newspapers necessarily differ from all other newspapers. Their task is not to inform, but to propagate and to organise. They have to propagate the doctrine of Marxism and Leninism and the Party Programme; they have to popularise all the government measures; and, of course, they must also conduct a permanent campaign against 'enemies' abroad. The organising rôle of the Soviet Press consists of mobilising the masses of the people for the fulfilment of the Five-Year Plan, for the planting of forest belts, for the building of irrigation canals, and for many other schemes.

In many ways Soviet newspapers resemble the official gazettes of other countries, which print decrees, announce appointments and report the awards of medals and orders. News is published in the Soviet Press only in as far as it may be able to satisfy the propaganda needs of the régime. That is why the Soviet Press tells us little about what is going on in the Soviet State, and from year to year the information has become scarcer.

As early as 1926, the Soviet newspapers ceased to publish figures on the cost of living. In 1933 the Press discontinued the publication of statistics about births and deaths. Since the war, Soviet newspapers have given no figures about the size of the population of the Soviet Union nor about the ethnic composition of various Soviet provinces and republics. The Soviet Press is also not supposed to publish reports about crime, railway accidents, mining disasters and other similar incidents which are bound to happen in any country.

### *Self-Criticism*

The Soviet newspapers, it is true, have not much space; they consist of four pages, slightly smaller in size than an average British daily, and their commitments are heavy, even without printing news in the actual sense of the word. After having published all the obligatory official announcements they have to devote their attention to self-criticism.

Self-criticism is one of the most important phrases in the Soviet vocabulary. What does it mean? Stalin gave an answer to this question when he said that in the Soviet Union, where there was only one party, the Communists themselves must reveal and correct their own mistakes. The Communists and all honest workers of the country, said Stalin, must reveal shortcomings in the work of the party and the state. This self-criticism is intended to replace in Russia that criticism which in other countries is exercised by an opposition in parliament.

For various reasons, the system of self-criticism has not worked too well. In a totalitarian country many

people just do not dare to utter a critical word, even if they are expressly invited to do so. Indeed, nobody can know where self criticism ends and where a slanderous attack on the régime starts. Stalin himself stressed early in 1928, that only self-criticism which would strengthen the leadership and increase its authority was permissible. He confused the issue completely by adding that the party would fight with all its means against the wrong self-criticism, the one which weakened Socialist reconstruction, disarmed the working class and disintegrated the ranks of economic experts.

Moreover, there is a hierarchy with regard to criticism and self-criticism which has to be strictly observed. Members of the government can be criticised only by *Pravda*, the central organ of the Communist Party, or by *Trud*, the organ of the Soviet Trade Unions. Such attacks are, actually, very rare. During the last five years they have affected, with one exception, only junior ministers.

District and provincial newspapers can criticise only local party and state officials, but whether they make use of this right is a different matter. They have to reckon with the fact that many local dignitaries strongly resent criticism. The party secretaries and state officials in the provinces and districts seem to believe that local newspapers should not interfere with their activities any more than a Moscow newspaper would dare to question an action taken by Stalin or Molotov.

Although suppression of justified criticism is an offence, provincial editors have frequently got into trouble for publishing critical articles and letters. They have been removed from their posts, expelled from the party, or victimised in other ways. Not long ago, an editor in the



Autonomous Republic of Bashkiria was forced to reprint at his own expense an entire edition of his newspaper, because it had contained an attack on various officials of the local trade department.

### *The Rôle of 'Pravda'*

An essential characteristic of the Soviet Press is the rôle which the newspaper *Pravda* plays as the mentor of all other Soviet papers, whether dailies, weeklies or monthlies.

*Pravda*, which is printed in an edition of 2,000,000 copies a day, derives its special authority from its intimate connection with the Communist hierarchy. Its editor is an *ex officio* member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and usually also a leading figure of its propaganda and agitation department. Thus the closest possible contact is assured between the editorial board of *Pravda* and the supreme Soviet leadership. Local newspapers may publish comments on fundamental issues of Soviet home politics and national economy only after *Pravda* has given the lead and devoted an editorial to the subject in question. To avoid committing ideological mistakes local newspapers simply repeat these *Pravda* leaders verbatim. This applies not only to small obscure Press organs, but also to those large newspapers which are published in the capitals of the non-Russian republics and run editions of hundreds of thousands of copies.

*Pravda* not only instructs the provincial papers in the handling of national problems; it also supervises their purely local news coverage. A special column of *Pravda*, 'From Local Newspapers,' examines closely whether

papers throughout the country really make an adequate contribution towards economic reconstruction, and to the fulfilment of the plan and whether they faithfully carry out all propaganda tasks assigned to them. *Pravda* exercises the same sort of supervision over all other national newspapers published in Moscow and has frequently attacked them for various inadequacies. *Pravda* is always right. If a Soviet provincial or national newspaper is reprimanded by *Pravda* it must not hit back, but must apologise for its mistakes and promise to do better next time. On the other hand, no other newspaper must dare to criticise shortcomings of *Pravda*. Only *Pravda* itself can do this.

To carry out its task as collective organiser and propagandist every local newspaper of the Soviet Union has not only an editorial staff, but also a number of so-called Workers' and Peasants' Correspondents. Many thousands of people are given an additional interest in life by being transformed into part-time journalists. Unfortunately, the Soviet Government's aim has not been primarily the promotion of mass journalism; it has used the Workers' and Peasants' Correspondents as informers to supplement the work of the political police. By reporting regularly about happenings in their factories and villages, the correspondents are keeping a close check on their fellow workers and fellow peasants.

In the countryside in particular the régime greatly relies on the assistance of the correspondents, whose special duty it is to denounce all infringements of discipline in collective farms. The reports sent in by the correspondents to their papers, on conditions in farms and factories, do not always get printed; in many cases

the editor has passed them on to the Public Prosecutor or to the police for further action. No wonder that the correspondents have become extremely unpopular with the ordinary citizens. Moreover, in the early years of the Soviet régime attempts on the lives of correspondents occurred so frequently that a special decree had to be passed for their protection.

### *Treatment of Foreign News*

We have so far discussed only the part which the Soviet Press plays on the home front. Let us now see how Russian Communist newspapers deal with foreign affairs. As far as comments on foreign policy and conditions in other countries are concerned, the initiative lies again with *Pravda*, and to a lesser extent with *Izvestia*, the organ of the government. These are the only Soviet newspapers which have ever had correspondents abroad.

As to foreign news, not only is this a state monopoly, as is everything else in Russia, but only one single institution is allowed to handle it—the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union, known under its abbreviated name—TASS. TASS correspondents in Western countries send in to their head office a vast amount of material, but only a tiny fraction of their output finds its way into the Soviet newspapers.

All TASS messages from abroad are checked day by day by a special commission including, amongst others, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of the MVD. The commission sees to it that the foreign news page of the Soviet newspapers lives up to Lenin's



definition, according to which the Press must be a collective propagandist and agitator. This means that the TASS news of the political, economic and cultural developments of non-Communist countries, and particularly of the standard of living of their peoples, is severely censored before it is released for publication.

Yet one quarter and even more of the contents of Soviet newspapers are devoted to foreign policy and to problems of other countries. What sort of foreign news is this? News items published under foreign date lines are simply reproductions of speeches by Communist leaders, statements of foreign Communist parties and reports about strikes and labour unrest. Long extracts from the Cominform journal and the pronouncements of the Soviet representatives in the organs of the United Nations are also allotted a great deal of space.

This treatment of foreign news is intended to convey to the reader that only the Soviet Union and its satellites are forging ahead while the rest of the world is declining and quickly becoming a prey to Communism.

Time and again the Soviet newspaper reader must have had a bad shock as a result of the one-sidedness of the information meted out to him. The victory of Nazism in Germany in 1933 for instance, took the average Russian completely by surprise since he had been made to believe that the only decisive political force in Germany were the Communists. In the post-war period, the Russian newspaper readers must have been wondering why the French and Italian Communists have still not come to power in their respective countries.

### *Censorship*

To say that there is Press censorship in Soviet Russia would be a gross understatement. Censorship starts in the USSR long before a newspaper article is written, let alone printed. The fact that Soviet newspapers can be owned only by the Communist Party, by Communist-controlled organisations or by government departments, excludes from the outset the emergence of heretic thoughts in the Soviet Press. A second safeguard which the régime takes regarding Press matters exists in the careful training and selection of the people admitted to the journalistic profession. Thus the highest degree of uniformity in all matters of principle is guaranteed before a single newspaper leaves the printing press. From the point of view of the régime all this is still not enough. To forestall any surprise the government has created a special agency in charge of the continuous streamlining of the Soviet Press.

This agency is called 'Glavlit' or by its full title 'Chief Administration for Matters of Literature and Publishing.' According to a Soviet Government decree of June, 1931, Glavlit exercises both a pre-publication and a post-publication censorship, the latter being intended to verify that the text as printed is the same as the one which the authorities originally approved. Glavlit formally belongs to the Ministry of Education, but it also has close ties with the police ministry, the MVD, which appoints some of its responsible officials.

The Soviet Press is not only an important political weapon in the hands of the Soviet Government; it is also a branch of Soviet planned economy, but by no means

one of its more successful ones. Until the early thirties, it is true, the Soviet Press grew in parallel with the increase of literacy, but then stagnation set in. The Second Five-Year Plan for the Press has never been fulfilled. It had provided that the Soviet newspapers were to reach an aggregate circulation of 60,000,000 copies. In 1950, at the end of the Fourth Five-Year Plan, the circulation of the Soviet Press was further away from this ambitious aim than before the war. Its circulation was down to 34,600,000. This was over ten per cent below the level of 1938 although the population of the USSR has increased since then by 20,000,000.

It seems, therefore, that a Press cannot develop on the basis of a plan alone, if there is at the same time both that rigid censorship and that utter monotony of the printed word which is one of the characteristics of conditions in a Communist state.



## XI

# RUSSIA'S INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION



THE Soviet régime has carried out an industrial revolution which has transformed the predominantly agricultural empire of the Czars into a modern industrial state. Unlike Western countries, which left the implementation of the Industrial Revolution to private enterprise, Russia has built up its industry with the help of a centralised planning system. From the October Revolution up to the end of 1950, Soviet Russia has put into effect five long-term plans, namely, Lenin's Plan for the Electrification of Russia, and four Five-Year Plans.

### *Achievements*

The Five-Year Plans, which are worked out by a huge bureaucratic machine, known as the State Planning Commission, cover almost every field of national activity—agriculture, industry, transport, education—but industrialisation has always been their main item. The bulk of the work for the industrialisation of Russia was carried out during the first two Five-Year Plans, running from the end of 1928 to the end of 1937.

During this period the Soviet régime created a machine-tool industry, a big chemical industry, a motor-car and

aircraft industry. Formerly backward Russia became the world's largest producer of agricultural machinery. Already before the Second World War, she ranked second in the world in the production of gold and iron ore, and third in the output of electricity and steel. As a result of the process of industrialisation, dozens of new towns came into existence, and the urban population of Soviet Russia increased in certain provinces by over 300 per cent.

The third Five-Year Plan which was put into operation in 1938, could not run to its natural end, in view of the outbreak of the Russian-German war. During the first three years of the Plan, 3,000 new industrial enterprises, mills and mines, were established, of which most were connected with the armament industry.

The fourth Five-Year Plan, which covered the period between 1946 and 1950, led not only to a rehabilitation of the industrial undertakings destroyed by the war, but also to a further strengthening of Russia's industrial potential, as compared with the pre-war period. Russia's coal production, for instance, now exceeds that of the United Kingdom, and is second only to America's.

Thus during the last thirty years Russia has passed through a similar industrial revolution to the one which Britain, the United States, Germany and other countries experienced during the nineteenth century. While no particular political group has ever claimed the credit for the industrial revolution in any Western country, the propaganda of the Russian Communist Party has identified industrialisation with Communism.

In reality, any Russian Government would have been faced with the task of building power stations, developing mining areas, and founding new factories. The Czarist

régime had actually carried out a great deal of the preparatory work, without which Soviet industrialisation would hardly have succeeded to the extent it did. For example, the Trans-Siberian Railway, over 6,500 miles long, that absolutely essential prerequisite of any economic exploitation of Soviet Asia, was constructed entirely before the revolution.

In fact, the Soviet régime has accomplished nothing of similar importance in the field of transport. Most of Russia's major ports, such as Odessa, Vladivostok, Archangel, and Leningrad, were also built prior to 1917. Both the coalmining industry and the oil industry of the Russian South were going concerns before the Bolsheviks came into power.

### *Sacrifices*

Although industrialisation is not an economic phenomenon characteristic of a Communist state, there are specific Communist methods for bringing about an industrial revolution. These methods are even more ruthless than those employed by nineteenth century capitalism. The Industrial Revolution in Britain took place at least in an atmosphere of political liberalism. It was possible to denounce openly its evil consequences, the injustices which it implied for the workers, and the detrimental effects which it had on the health of women and children who worked in factories.

Karl Marx, living as a foreigner in England, was able to write in the British Museum his voluminous indictment of capitalism, which, until this day, has served as the ideological basis of Communism. What foreign or Russian



scholar, could consider even in his dreams, compiling, in the Lenin Library in Moscow, a work denouncing the Soviet forced labour system, that by-product of the Russian Industrial Revolution?

The Industrial Revolution in the West resulted in a mass production of cheap consumer goods. In England, for instance, in the sixties of the last century, there was a marked improvement in the standard of living of the broad masses, compensating them for the 'hungry forties.' In Soviet Russia, the beneficial effect of industrialisation has been delayed by the exaggerated emphasis which the government has always put on the development of heavy industry, and on the building of so-called 'industrial giants.' These are colossal factories, employing several thousands of workers, vast dams and power stations which are able to inspire the awe of people at home, and to serve propaganda purposes abroad.

On the other hand, the Kremlin has always considered as a matter of secondary importance all that would not directly strengthen the might of the state, but 'only' serve the well-being of its citizens. This includes, in particular, the building of dwelling houses, which ought to be a top-priority owing to the drastic housing shortage in the USSR, as well as the production of kitchen utensils, clothing and food. The development of various branches of heavy industry has frequently lagged behind the targets fixed by the various Five-Year Plans, but the plan for light industry has been almost systematically under-fulfilled. Russia's output of cotton fabrics is an example. As a result of four Five-Year Plans, Russia is now producing only twice as much cotton cloth than was produced under the Czarist régime, while production of

electric energy, for instance, has increased twenty times. Production of cotton cloth in 1950 was still below the target which had originally been fixed for 1932, the last year of the first Five-Year Plan.

Other branches of the Soviet textile industry have been similarly unsuccessful. Thus, during the second Five-Year Plan, the output for woollen fabrics did not reach even fifty per cent of its target. In view of the shortage of consumer goods, some factory directors are quite satisfied if they can formally fulfil the plan by producing the scheduled number of articles, however poor their quality may be. Complaints about the sale of sub-standard goods by state trading organisations are a regular feature in the Soviet Press.

### *The Part of Women and Youth*

The Soviet citizen has to pay for the industrialisation not only in his capacity as consumer. Just as in the Industrial Revolution in the West, Soviet economic planning relies greatly on the work of women. Men and women receive equal pay for equal work in Soviet Russia. This is a very progressive and laudable principle, but the 'equal pay' which the male worker receives is not sufficient for the maintenance of a family. The wives of the workers have, accordingly, been forced into industry to an ever-increasing degree.

Between 1921 and 1937 alone, the number of Soviet women in industry increased from 3,200,000 to 8,500,000. At the outbreak of the Second World War, two out of every five Soviet workers were women, and during the war as many as seven out of ten. To-day women may

form about half of the workers of the country. They can frequently be seen employed on very heavy work, repairing roads and tramlines, or engaged in coalmining. In the Soviet hierarchy, on the other hand, we find practically no women at all. There are only two women among the 125 members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party which was elected at the Nineteenth Congress in 1952.

Soviet youth suffers from a similar discrimination. There is a considerable disproportion between its contribution to the economic life of the country and its political influence. Many achievements in the industrial field could be materialised only by the self-sacrifice, devotion to work, and the spirit of adventure of Soviet Russia's rising generation. Youth has played a leading and decisive part in such famous construction works as the Dnieper Dam, the Stalingrad Tractor Works, and the new metallurgical plants in the Urals. In the high councils of the party, however, youth has hardly any say.

### *The Industrialisation of Soviet Asia*

The Soviet régime has devoted its particular attention to the industrialisation of the Asiatic territories of the USSR. To-day the five Central Asian Soviet Republics possess a fairly developed industry; they have metallurgical plants, cotton mills, and big power stations. They produce coal, oil, and non-ferrous metals in considerable quantities. Theoretically, the growth of an industry in Central Asian and other non-Russian territories should have served the cause of economic independence of the peoples concerned.



In practice this has not been the case, for the governments of the individual Soviet Republics have no influence on the contents of the industrialisation plans. The plans are drafted at the centre in Moscow; they are financed by Moscow and administered by Moscow. Therefore the pace and purpose of industrialisation in this or that Asiatic Republic are not determined by local requirements, but by the economic and strategic interests of the Communist State as a whole.

The industrialisation of certain Asiatic areas has taken place so speedily that the local nationalities have been unable to cope with the new situation which it created. They have, in particular, been unable to staff the new enterprises which the Soviet Government has initiated. Manpower was, consequently, chiefly provided by a large scale shifting of population. Indeed, during the Five-Year Plan periods, thousands, and hundreds of thousands, of skilled workers, specialists and planning experts, left European Russia and went to the East. They settled down permanently in the lands of the Turkmenians and Kazakhs, of the Tadshiks and Uzbeks.

According to official Soviet statistics, over 1,500,000 Europeans, Russians, Ukrainians and others left for Soviet Central Asia between 1926 and 1939. In some areas the European immigration became larger than the population increase of the local Asiatic nationalities; in other areas the European immigrants totally outnumbered the indigenous peoples. European predominance became particularly strong in the towns and in the new mining regions.

Soviet industrialisation has not only necessitated the migration of skilled European labour from West to East;

it has also encouraged a population move in the opposite direction. Thousands of Asians are now working as unskilled labourers in the plants of the Urals, in the Moscow industrial region, and in the Donets coalmining basin. At their new places of residence, many of these migrant workers are unable to preserve their national individuality. Their children in particular frequently assimilated the Russian environment. But this does not mean that industrialisation is detrimental to the non-Russians and beneficent to the Russian common man. A Russian worker has no greater say in the management of his own factory than has a worker from Tataria or Uzbekistan. The Russian workers supply the majority of the manpower for the young industry of the Soviet Union, but they are not its masters. This industry is administered by a managerial upper class which the Soviet régime has created.

## XII

# THE WORKER AND THE RÉGIME



THE Bolshevik Party has always claimed that it carried out the October Revolution of 1917 in the name of the Russian working class. The Russian-controlled international Communist movement has likewise claimed to champion the aspirations of the industrial workers. A fundamental principle of Leninism demands that the urban working class, however small, must exercise political leadership over the peasant masses in all countries of the world.

From all this one might deduce that Soviet Russia is a workers' state and that the defence of workers' interests is the over-riding consideration of Soviet home politics. One might be tempted even to assume that workers have a decisive say in the running of Soviet industry.

But how are things in reality? During the first years of the Soviet régime, Russian Communists generally agreed that the factories should belong to the workers, just as the land should belong to the peasants. Many workers, old trusted members of the Bolshevik Party, in fact occupied the posts of factory managers in the early twenties. Workers' participation in the management of each factory was also secured by a 'Committee of Three,' which included, in addition to the manager, the secretary



of the Communist Party cell of the factory and a trade union representative. The latter, who was the actual spokesman of the workers, could always be out-voted by the other two, but he could at least raise his voice in all matters affecting the welfare of the factory personnel.

### *Bureaucrats and Managers*

This very imperfect form of a Soviet industrial democracy was abolished during the first Five-Year Plan period. In 1929 the director became the sole master in every factory. The 'Committee of Three' was at first deprived of its authority and then abolished altogether. Promotion of ordinary workers to the rank of factory directors also ceased to be fashionable. Technical skill became a more important qualification for administering a state plant than the proletarian origin of the manager. The heads of Soviet industrial undertakings were, as a result, recruited almost exclusively from that 'technical intelligentsia' which has developed into the new ruling class of the Soviet Union. It forms that part of Soviet society on which the Communist Party counts primarily for the implementation of its industrialisation programme. The technical intelligentsia not only provides factory managers but also staffs those twenty-odd ministries which are in charge of the central administration of Soviet Russia's industrial undertakings.

This ministerial bureaucracy—an army of hundreds of thousands of planning experts, technicians and ordinary administrators—is in fact much more powerful than all the factory managers put together. The officials of both the ministries themselves and of the state trusts into which

most Soviet plants are grouped, work out all fundamental problems of production, they deal with the supply of raw materials and the disposal of the finished goods. Factory managers, on the other hand, can do no more than carry out the instructions which they receive from the centre.

As a chief of personnel, however, the Soviet factory director has a much greater authority than his opposite number in a capitalist country possesses. His disciplinary powers are not limited or controlled by any workers' representatives. Nor can he use his own discretion in varying the severity of his discipline. Laws and decrees of the Soviet Government compel him to be ruthless in securing the accurate fulfilment of all tasks which the state plan has assigned to his factory. If he tolerates offences against the strict observance of factory discipline he himself may have to render account for a violation of discipline, if not for 'wrecking' or sabotage. A factory director who does not prevent the production of sub-standard goods can be sent to forced labour camps for periods ranging from five to eight years.

The job of a Soviet factory manager is thus full of risks, but it has its compensations too. Not only do managers receive basic salaries several times higher than ordinary workers' wages, but also they get bonuses out of special funds for the satisfactory completion of government assignments. If a factory manager makes a success of his job he may become an official in a ministry, or in a state trust. Then he will be in a position to give orders to other factory directors. He may even advance to the post of minister. At present about one-third of all ministers of the Central Government actually belong to the new upper class of technicians and managers.

*Labour Discipline*

The labour discipline in Soviet factories which this managerial class is enforcing, is the strictest in the world. Take absenteeism, for instance. Until 1940 absenteeism used to be defined officially as an absence from work without valid reason for a whole day. The punishment for workers guilty of such absenteeism was dismissal from work. Legislation in force at the present time treats absentees with much greater harshness. A person causing a loss of twenty minutes working time without valid reason can now be sentenced to up to six months of corrective labour at his place of work.

This 'corrective labour served on the spot' is a rather original form of punishment. The worker in question continues to work at his own factory but after work he is escorted to a heavily guarded labour camp nearby. The working hours of a corrective labourer are longer, whereas his wages are as much as twenty-five per cent lower than those normally due to him. Moreover, the corrective labourer forfeits his social insurance benefits for the duration of the penalty, and the amount of his old age pension is likewise reduced.

The threat of corrective labour also exists for all workers who are absent from work for even less than twenty minutes, say for four or five minutes or less, if this offence is committed three times in one month, or four times in two consecutive months. This applies to workers who arrive late in the morning, spend too long over meals or knock off before time in the evening. In the case of minor breaches of discipline a factory manager



can transfer a worker or an employee to lower paid work during a period of several months or degrade him to an inferior post altogether.

Especially severe discipline exists in Soviet transport. A decree of April 5, 1943, put the entire personnel of the Soviet railways and of inland navigation under military law. This decree which introduced a rigid military hierarchy into the Soviet railways and into the river fleet has never been repealed. The Soviet Press still refers to higher transport officials as 'commanders.'

The Soviet transport commanders are as powerful as officers of the regular army are in relation to ordinary soldiers. Thus a station master is entitled to put any of his employees under arrest for a period of ten days if he finds him guilty of a violation of discipline. There are also special railway courts dealing with major offences of railwaymen.

It is a general characteristic of Soviet labour legislation that all wartime emergency measures have become an integral part of the peace-time order. On the eve of the Russian-German war, the Soviet Government ordered the introduction of the eight-hour working day replacing the seven-hour working day which the Soviet Constitution had guaranteed to the 'overwhelming majority of the workers.' The Soviet workers probably thought that the increase of working hours was a temporary one. But, instead of repealing the decree after the war, the Soviet Government changed the Constitution for good, and the Soviet workers are now working eight hours a day just as the workers in the so-called capitalist countries do.

Compulsory direction of labour has also been retained in Soviet Russia. Engineers, technicians, skilled workers

and office employees can still be transferred, together with their families, to the remotest corners of the Soviet Union, if this is required by the necessities of production. The Soviet Government is also legally entitled to conscript every year up to 1,000,000 boys between fourteen and nineteen years of age for industrial work. The boys in question are trained at first in trade and factory schools and are then allocated for four years to state enterprises of any locality which the Ministry of Labour Reserves may see fit to choose.

### *Privileged Groups of Workers*

The Soviet Government does not treat the Russian working class as an indivisible whole. In the early years of the régime, it is true, there had been a marked tendency in favour of levelling out the differences between various wage groups. But such egalitarianism, abandoned long ago, is now even denounced as a deviation from the party programme. In the attempt to implement the Five-Year Plans the Soviet Government has promoted a far-reaching differentiation within the ranks of Russia's industrial workers. It has introduced various incentives, such as piece-rates, and the establishment of special groups of privileged workers.

The first institution of this kind were the so-called shockworkers, who for their high working achievements were given better living quarters, larger rations and better facilities for the education of their children than were offered to the average workman. In 1935 the shockworkers were replaced by the 'Stakhanovites.' They took

their name from Alexey Grigorevich Stakhanov, a coal-miner who, it was claimed, had exceeded his norm fourteen times in one shift.

Soviet propaganda has transformed Stakhanov into a nation-wide hero and a whole movement was brought into being which carried Stakhanov's name. Every skilled worker exceeding his norm became ultimately 'Stakhanovite' and thus a member of the new workers' aristocracy.

A Stakhanovite differs from a rank-and-file-worker first of all by his higher wages. A Stakhanovite engaged in coalmining, for instance, may earn ten times as much as an unskilled coalminer. The Stakhanovite also enjoys considerable privileges in the field of social services. He is given priority in obtaining tickets to sanatoria and rest-homes, which are not normally accessible to the ordinary worker. But even the large majority of the Stakhanovites have to pay for accommodation in sanatoria. Only a tiny selected group comprising the most privileged ones are admitted free of charge.

The workers' aristocracy is also given special consideration in the political sphere. As a matter of fact, most, if not all, workers who have been made members of the Soviet Russian Parliament, the Supreme Soviet, are Stakhanovites.

Like any other aristocracy, the Soviet workers' aristocracy too can be subdivided into groups of greater and lesser prominence. The highest strata of Stakhanovites is made up of the 'Heroes of Socialist Toil.' This title has been awarded since 1939 for particularly outstanding achievements on the production front. During a certain period the title automatically carried double pay, but at present no additional monetary income is attached to it.



Between the 'Heroes of Socialist Toil' and the average Stakhanovite there are several intermediary categories such as the holders of the orders 'Prowess in Labour' and 'Excellence in Labour.' Both used to receive a special monthly bonus but at present they are entitled only to free tram rides and other minor privileges.

One must not imagine that the Soviet workers have accepted without any opposition all measures which the Communist Government has imposed on them. Some devices of workers' exploitation have encountered active resistance, in particular the introduction of the Stakhanov system. The first Stakhanovites met with open hostility on the part of their fellow-workers who rendered them responsible for the general increase of norms, which in many factories followed the emergence of the Stakhanov movement. In a number of cases Stakhanovites were even assassinated.

But all acts of workers' resistance in Soviet Russia must necessarily have a sporadic and isolated character, since there is no organisation in the USSR which would act on their behalf. The organisations which in democratic countries look after the interests of the workers—the trade unions—are in Soviet Russia just another government department engaged in boosting the production drive.

## XIII

# TRADE UNIONS AND CO-OPERATIVES



THE Soviet trade unions claim to be the biggest trade union organisation in the world. According to official data, 28,500,000 Soviet citizens are trade unionists. This is almost twice as much as the combined membership of the two big trade union organisations of the United States, the American Federation of Labour, and the Congress of Industrial Organisations, and more than three times as much as the membership of the British TUC. During the years of Soviet power, the membership of Soviet trade unions has increased from year to year, from 2,500,000 in 1918 to 11,000,000 in 1928, to 17,000,000 in 1933 until it reached its present colossal strength.

### *The Degeneration of Soviet Trade Unionism*

In any other state of the world an organisation of the size of the Soviet trade unions would wield a formidable power which any government would have to take into account. In Soviet Russia however, trade unions are devoid of any real influence on the economic and political life of the country. The more they have grown numerically the less have they been able to assert their individuality as an organisation.

The comparatively small unions of the twenties were still a fairly powerful body similar in character to trade unions in other countries. Under an energetic and able leader, Michael Tomskey, who was himself of working class origin, the Soviet trade unions really stood up in many cases in defence of the workers' interests. In the autumn of 1928, Tomskey was purged, and, under a new leadership, the trade unions developed quickly into a cross between an annexe of the Bolshevik Party and a government department. A few years after his removal from power Tomskey committed suicide.

The subordination of the Russian trade unions to the hierarchy of the Communist Party not only operates in practice—it is also expressly laid down in their statute. The Soviet trade unions—says the statute—‘carry out their entire work under the leadership of the Communist Party—the organising and directing force of Soviet society. The trade unions of the USSR rally the working masses behind the party of Lenin-Stalin.’

The leadership of the Communist Party over the trade unions precludes from the outset any form of internal democracy or of equality between trade union members. Communist leadership over the trade unions means that only trade unionists who are at the same time Communist Party members count. In other words, three or four million Communists who form not more than ten or fifteen per cent of the total membership of the trade unions control them from top to bottom. Organised Communists provide all the leading full-time trade union officials, the secretaries of the seventy-odd industrial unions, as well as the Soviet delegates to international trade union conferences.



The Communist trade union members also dominate those rare trade union congresses which are held in Soviet Russia itself. At the last congress, which took place in 1949, seventy per cent of all delegates were members of the Communist Party. It was the first congress to be summoned since 1932. Thus during seventeen years, the highest statutory organ of the Soviet trade unions was denied the opportunity of electing the trade union leaders and of discussing all those far-reaching changes which the Soviet Government had introduced into the Russian labour legislation during the thirties and forties. Most of these changes had been unpopular with the workers and had there been a free discussion, it might have been highly embarrassing to the government. Such a free discussion did not, however, take place; criticism was confined to the actions of various not too highly placed personalities and of individual ministries. Nobody dared to question the wisdom of measures taken by the Soviet Government as a whole and approved by the party.

Authentic factory workers formed less than a quarter of all delegates of the strange Soviet trade union congress of 1949. The large majority of the delegates was made up by full-time trade union officials, intellectuals and employees. Also some of the leading scientists of the country, recipients of very high salaries, disguised themselves as 'trade unionists' for the occasion.

Not only the composition of the last congress bears witness to the bureaucratisation of the Soviet trade unions, but also their entire inflated administrative apparatus does. Their pre-war budget showed that members had to provide funds for the upkeep of over 50,000 administrative officials. This did not include tens of

thousands of employees of social clubs and sports societies, under trade union control, whose salaries were not paid out of membership fees. Since the war the Soviet trade unions have failed to produce any figures on the size of their salaried staff, nor have they published their own budget in full.

### *Centralised Leadership*

Another characteristic feature of the Soviet trade unions is their rigidly centralised structure. In Britain and the United States the national trade union centres are comparatively loose federations granting far-reaching internal autonomy to all unions affiliated to them. The British TUC for instance, has no authority to interfere with the internal problems and policy of say, the National Union of Mineworkers or the National Union of Railwaymen. Not so in Soviet Russia. The All-Union-Central Council of Trade Unions in Moscow, exercises a systematic control over all its affiliated organisations; it issues binding orders to them, and confirms or rejects their budgets. More than that, the Central Council establishes, abolishes and merges unions on the instructions of the government whenever it thinks the interests of production require such administrative changes.

The Soviet trade unions are, therefore, in a continuous process of reorganisation. In the thirties the Soviet government decided that trade unions must specialise as much as possible, and the number of unions increased seven times during ten years, without the trade union members ever being consulted on the matter. Unions were founded even for very small branches of industry and some unions were even split on a geographical basis. After the war the

Soviet Government decided that specialisation had gone too far. The number of unions was reduced by more than half, from 176 to about 70, again without the trade union members having any say in the matter.

### *A 'Jack of All Trades'*

That a union can be formed by an order from above may be inconceivable to a Western European or American worker, but it is quite a natural procedure in a country where the trade unions fulfil a great variety of governmental functions.

The so-called Soviet trade union movement is a real 'jack of all trades.' The authorities of the state and the leadership of the Communist Party make use of the unions in all cases where they themselves prefer to remain in the background. In the sphere of politics the Soviet trade unions are, as Lenin himself put it, 'a school of Communism.' They are supposed to educate the masses politically and to see to it that their members are ardent supporters of the régime. They also have to explain to the workers all government measures, particularly those taken in the industrial field. Whenever the Soviet Government embarks on a new policy or launches a propaganda action it expects the trade unions to organise mass support for it. Accordingly trade unions supply canvassers for every Soviet electoral campaign as well as many members of the electoral commissions. The organisation of peace committees and peace conferences also falls into the scope of the trade unions.

The most important tasks of the Soviet trade unions are, of course, of an economic nature. According to their



statute the first duty of the trade unions consists in mobilising all workers and employees for the fulfilment and over-fulfilment of the state plans. Other primary tasks of the unions are, according to the statute, 'to raise the productivity of labour,' 'to improve the quality of production, and to lower its cost.'

The first obligation of the individual trade unionist is 'strict observation of state and labour discipline,' which again means that the plan has to be fulfilled at any cost. The statute also mentions certain other duties of the trade unions, such as protection of labour, industrial security and the building of workers' houses. Soviet practice has shown, however, that these are only secondary points in the programme of the unions and that their implementation is subordinate to the necessities of production. The Soviet Press has, indeed, admitted on many occasions that trade unions frequently neglect those of their duties which deal with the defence of specific workers' interests. In a number of instances trade unions have paid attention to bad living conditions of workers only after the productivity of labour had decreased in a branch of industry or in certain plants.

### *Wage Policy*

What about wages? Do the Soviet trade unions assist the workers in a fight for higher wages, as unions in other countries do? And can there be such a fight under Communist rule? The answer to these questions is in the negative, and the Soviet trade union leaders have never even attempted to conceal the fact that under no circumstances can Soviet trade unions be expected to make wage claims.

The well-known Soviet trade union leader, Lozovsky, in his *Handbook on Soviet Trade Unions*, which was published in 1937, said: 'In the USSR there is no struggle between the workers and the administrative bodies for higher wages as there is in capitalist conditions, nor can there be such a struggle.' And the present chairman of the Soviet trade unions, Kuznetsov, wrote on February 20, 1947, in the newspaper *Trud*: 'As far as wages are concerned, it is well-known that the rates are established only by the government.' And so it is indeed.

The Soviet state planning commission fixes the total amount of wages to be paid out during the whole planning period, during a given year and a given quarter. This sum total is then divided up between the various branches of industry and finally between the various plants. At some stage of this planning process the Soviet trade union chiefs are called in to rubber-stamp the different systems of wages, worked out by the experts so that they can be then included into the collective agreements. The plan, together with all its provisions about wages, becomes a law as soon as the party leadership has finally accepted it. A strike for higher wages, or even mere agitation for wage increase, would be a sabotage of the plan, a hostile act against the régime, to which the trade unions can be no party since they themselves are a government agency.

One might be tempted to ask why people support an organisation which does so little for the promotion of workers' interests as the Soviet trade unions. Union membership is not compulsory in Soviet Russia, but the trade union chiefs have an important instrument in their hands to compel practically every worker and employee of the country to become a trade unionist. The Soviet

trade unions administer the social insurance funds of the Soviet State, and insurance benefits for trade union members are one hundred per cent higher than for non-members. Under these circumstances it is surprising that there are any people at all who decide not to join a union.

### *Consumers' Co-operatives*

In democratic countries the working class is organised not only in trade unions, but also in consumer co-operatives. The more socially advanced a country is, the greater, as a rule, is its co-operative movement. The International Co-operative Alliance, the world organisation of consumers' co-operatives, has laid down the principles by which the work of genuine co-operatives must be guided. Co-operatives must be free of state and political interference, their officials must be democratically elected on all levels, and they must be at the service of everybody.

The consumer co-operatives of the Soviet Union do not comply with any of these principles of a democratic co-operative movement. As far as state interference goes, there is probably no other organisation in the Soviet Union with whose affairs the government has interfered as much as with the 'All-Russian Central Union of Consumer Societies,' or 'Tsentsosoyuz,' as it is usually called. Until about 1930 the co-operatives still enjoyed a certain amount of freedom. The régime considered them as an ally in the fight against private traders, who had been allowed to exist in some form until the late twenties. Things changed when state trade became the sole competitor of co-operative trade. Those who tried to build up a powerful co-operative movement were soon branded



as 'wreckers,' were removed from the leadership of the Tsentrosoyuz, and brought to trial.

The change of leaders alone was not sufficient. The state did its best to boost its own trading organisations, and to restrict the activities of the co-operatives in various ways. Factory canteens were removed from the control of the co-operatives in 1932; farms run by the co-operatives were taken over by other organisations, and co-operative shops attached to industrial and transport undertakings were put under the trade unions. As a result of all this the share of the co-operatives in the total trade turn-over declined sharply, from sixty-nine per cent in 1931 to 38.3 per cent in 1934.

In 1935 the government went a step further. It disbanded the co-operatives in all urban areas—a move which even Hitler had never dared to make against the German consumer societies. The state confiscated the property of the co-operatives in the towns, and established its absolute monopoly there. The co-operatives survived in the rural areas, but apparently they proved unable to work satisfactorily.

In January, 1939, the government and the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a joint statement saying that many co-operative officials had once again turned out to be 'wreckers,' and had done tremendous damage to Soviet trade in villages.

In November, 1946, came a new policy switch. The government ordered the Tsentrosoyuz to open in towns co-operative shops which it had to close down in 1935. Henceforward townspeople were allowed to buy in co-operative shops, but actual co-operative membership remained confined to the rural population. This is hardly

a loss for the Russian working class, for co-op membership has little meaning in the USSR. The Soviet co-operatives are run on bureaucratic lines.

Eighteen years elapsed between the second congress of the Tsentrosoyuz which was held in 1930 and the third congress which took place in 1948. According to the original statute of Tsentrosoyuz a congress is to be summoned every second year. The co-operatives are thus easily the most undemocratic organisation in the Soviet Union—and this means a great deal.

## XIV

# THE PEASANT AND THE RÉGIME



RUSSIA is still predominantly a peasant country despite all the efforts of the Soviet Government to build a large industry and to create a strong urban working class. On the eve of the Second World War two-thirds of Russia's population lived in rural areas. And this is still the approximate position to-day. Soviet agrarian policy is faced, therefore, with tremendous responsibilities. On its success or failure depends the standard of living of tens of millions of Soviet citizens who earn their livelihood from agriculture and cattle-breeding.

The essence of Soviet agrarian policy can be summarised in three words; collectivisation, mechanisation, and 'bureaucratisation.'

Of the three, collectivisation is the most important. It was an operation of such magnitude that the Soviet Government could not embark on it immediately. When the Bolsheviks came to power in October, 1917, they were faced with the fact that the peasants had put an end, by spontaneous action, to the big estates which, by the way, had never formed more than a small fraction of the entire arable soil of Czarist Russia.



On the very morrow of the revolution the Soviet Government published its famous 'Decree on Land' which did little more than confirm the state of affairs which the peasants themselves had created. The peasants thought that the decree, which abolished big landed property without compensation, was the final act of the revolution; they hoped that they would remain masters of the soil in all future. From the point of view of the Bolshevik Party, however, the 'Decree on Land' was to be but a temporary propaganda gesture. Right from the beginning the party aim in agriculture was collectivisation, but it had to be postponed owing to the total disorganisation of the Russian economy and the weakness of the Communist village organisations. It took the party ten years before it decided in principle on the implementation of its collectivisation programme, and over twelve years before collective farms were actually set up on a mass scale. But, once started, collectivisation proceeded with the rapidity of an avalanche, to which it was similar in its crushing effects.

### *The Liquidation of the 'Kulaks'*

On joining the collective farm the individual peasant had to hand over to it practically all his land and cattle, his agricultural implements, his seed stocks and all the buildings he owned with the exception of his dwelling houses. No wonder that collectivisation had to be launched in face of the stiff resistance of the Russian peasant masses.

The fifteenth congress of the Communist Party which in December, 1927, took the fateful decision on the

organisation of collective farms, consisted of ninety-five per cent of towns' people, workers, employees and officials, and five per cent of peasant representatives. The actual organisers of the collective farms, too, were not peasants; they were twenty-five thousand city workers whom the party had despatched to the villages. These twenty-five thousand Communist agitators were, first of all, expected to stop up the class struggle in the Soviet countryside, by inciting the poor peasants against the well-to-do ones, the so-called 'kulaks.' There were over 5,000,000 of such 'kulaks' in the Soviet Union. The party demanded the liquidation of the 'kulaks' as a class. This was carried out by their mass deportation to distant areas and by the confiscation of their cattle and land.

This confiscation formed the nucleus of many of the new collective farms. The fight against the 'kulaks' was conducted with particular ruthlessness in the areas of the Asiatic national minorities where the 'kulaks' were usually identical with the tribal aristocracy. 'Liquidation of the "kulaks"' thus meant, in many cases, the destruction of the tribal society. The city workers and party officials who were to carry out the collectivisation policy had little knowledge of agricultural problems. Often they were unable to discriminate between a 'kulak' and an ordinary peasant. They frequently applied deportation and confiscation measures to everybody who could not be classed as an outspoken village poor. The party and state leadership had laid down that collectivisation ought to be carried out on a voluntary basis, but in practice force was used frequently. Compulsion was the only way by which local party officials were able to reach the

target figures for collectivisation which had been fixed in advance for the areas in their charge.

The compulsory collectivisation resulted in an economic and human catastrophe. It provoked desperate peasant resistance, which police terror and mass trials were unable to overcome. The peasants destroyed their grain and slaughtered their cattle rather than surrender these to the collective farms.

Between 1929 and 1933—those fateful four years in which an average of one hundred and twenty collective farms came into being every day—Soviet Russia's livestock was reduced by half. Shortage of grain resulting from the disorganisation of agriculture and coinciding with a period of drought, led to outright famine conditions even in the most fertile regions of the country. Millions of people died of starvation.

It has been said that Russia lost as many human lives during the collectivisation period as during the Second World War. But such assertions are difficult to check, for the Soviet Government stopped the publication of birth and death statistics in the midst of the collectivisation campaign. Collectivisation was extended not only to the grain producing regions; it affected also every Soviet citizen engaged in all branches of agriculture and cattle-breeding; the winegrower of sub-tropical Transcaucasia, the reindeer-breeder of the Russian Arctic, the cotton farmer and the nomadic shepherd of Central Asia. Several hundred thousand of the latter were able to preserve their cattle by leaving the Soviet Union and escaping into China and Afghanistan.



*The Fight for the Private Plot*

By 1935 the process of collectivisation was completed. Practically all arable land of the Soviet Union was either transferred to the Kolkhoz, as the collective farms are called in Russian, or incorporated into the state farms, the Sovkhoz. But this was not the end of the big fight between the Communist state and the peasants. The state had won the first round, but it had won it only at the price of a concession.

The original Communist idea had been to take from the peasant who joined the Kolkhoz all his land and all his cattle. In view of the widespread resistance to collectivisation, collective farm members were finally allowed to retain tiny plots of land varying in size between half an acre and one acre and a quarter. In some special areas the maximum size of the private allotment was even two and a half acres. The collective farmers of most regions of European Russia could also keep in private ownership one cow, two calves, one sow, ten sheep or goats, as well as poultry. In certain areas with developed cattle breeding, most of them located in Asia, peasants could have two or three cows, two or three sows and as many as twenty to twenty-five sheep and goats. The population of nomadic and semi-nomadic regions was entitled to a larger amount of livestock, but as the Soviet régime was out to destroy the nomadic way of life, anyhow, this part of the concession had but limited value.

The small plot of land which the member of the collective farms was permitted to keep for his personal use was often no larger than a kitchen-garden, but psychologically

it was of great importance to him. All his deep-rooted attachment to the soil went into this tiny allotment, and he even tried to enlarge it beyond its legal maximum size.

The big collective farm, on the other hand, remained something alien to the peasant. He was determined to work as little as possible for it. Thus, in view of widespread peasant sabotage, the whole collective farm system might well have collapsed at the end of the thirties without the drastic measures taken by the Soviet Government.

In 1939 the Kremlin ordered the confiscation of all land and cattle which the collective farmers had acquired above the maximum limit, and also ordered compulsory work on the collective farms. Each collective farmer from then on had to work for the Kolkhoz for a minimum number of so called labour days, days on which certain norms are fulfilled. According to this system of labour days, a system which is still in force, the peasants of the main grain-producing areas have to work 120 labour days; those of other areas 100 days, and members of collective farms growing cotton as many as 150 days a year.

### *Compulsory Deliveries*

Many critics of the Soviet régime have asserted that the collective farm system and, in particular, the introduction of compulsory labour days, amounts, in fact, to the resurrection of serfdom. They have stated that the Russian peasant of to day has obligations to the Kolkhoz which are similar to those which his grandfather had towards the 'Lord of the Manor.'

The Russian peasant has, indeed, lost under the collective farm system that freedom of action which he had

enjoyed in the comparatively liberal period between 1906 and 1917. Of course, he does get some benefits from his work in the Kolkhoz. In accordance with the number of labour days he receives a dividend both in kind and in money. In the average collective farm about one quarter of the harvest and about half of the monetary income is divided between the members. Dividends are paid out to the collective farmers only after the fulfilment of all obligations which the Kolkhoz has towards the state, and there are quite a number of obligations.

First of all, each Kolkhoz has to make its compulsory grain deliveries. The amount is fixed in advance in absolute figures, usually irrespective of the quality of the harvest. In return for compulsory deliveries the farms receive only a token payment, not exceeding one-eighth or one tenth of the actual wholesale price for the produce concerned. Then, there are contractual deliveries for which a full price is paid; and, finally, the farms have to surrender up to one-fifth of the harvest—of the total harvest, not of the marketable surplus—to the 'Machine Tractor Stations' for services rendered.

These Machine Tractor Stations—usually called by their initials MTS—are an institution which is almost as characteristic of Soviet agrarian policy as are the collective farms themselves. Machine Tractor Stations are in the first place what their name suggests, depôts of tractors, combine harvesters and other agricultural machines. They have played a tremendous part in the mechanisation of Russian agriculture. To day they are indispensable to the collective farms which are not themselves supposed to own agricultural machinery in larger quantities. In addition to their undeniable constructive work in the



economic and technical sphere, Soviet Russia's ten thousand-odd MTS also constitute a political weapon of first importance. Each MTS has a political commissar with the title of 'deputy director.' He provides political education for the villages, assists the Communist cells in the individual collective farms and even interferes with their internal administration if necessary.

### *The New Rural Upper Class*

The personnel of the Machine Tractor Stations belong to the most well-to-do elements of the new Russian countryside. Some tractor drivers, for instance, have record wages comparing favourably with even the highest earnings of skilled workers in the cities.

The new Soviet rural aristocracy is not confined to the workers and officials of the MTS. Collectivisation has resulted quite generally in a new social differentiation of the Russian village. There are rich and poor collective farms to day, just as there had once been rich and poor individual peasants. In some collective farms where the soil is poor the dividend to the members is only sufficient to safeguard physical survival; in other farms, again, members make handsome profits.

But even within one and the same farm there are considerable differences of income. Instead of the 'kulaks' of the old Russian village there are now Stakhanovites and Heroes of Socialist Toil, just as in the industrial centres. There are also hundreds of thousands of accountants and book-keepers without whom the collective farm system cannot work.

Finally, there are the collective farm chairmen who

ought to be elected by the peasants, but who are frequently appointed by the party or state authorities. They could have become the genuine spokesmen of peasants' interests but the Soviet Government has taken great care to transform them into agents of the state, working on a commission basis for the increase of agricultural production. In addition to their salaries they get special monthly bonuses, which rise and fall in relation to the total income of their respective farms. A collective farm chairman can, therefore, earn three times, or even five times, as much as an ordinary peasant. Thus, the Communist State has given the peasants neither freedom nor equality.

## XV

### THE SOVIET TAXPAYER



THE taxation policy of the Soviet Government has played a very important part in building and consolidating the Communist régime. Taxes in Soviet Russia are more than an item in the budget. From the point of view of the Communist Party they are not only a means of financing the Five-Year-Plan but also a political and economic weapon of great striking power. The régime uses taxes to accelerate changes in the social structure of Soviet society, to destroy the so-called class enemy and to promote the prosperity of the new privileged classes and castes. Taxes also serve the encouragement of those institutions which Soviet power has created.

#### *The Agricultural Tax*

For example, the Soviet Government has introduced an 'agricultural tax,' which is intended to safeguard the final triumph of the collective farms. Its task is to prevent the peasants from working too much for themselves and too little for the collective farm, the 'Kolkhoz.' It hits their small allotments and also such livestock as they are allowed to own privately. Out of the income which they derive from the produce of their private land, and from the milk of their only cow, they must surrender



twice as much in taxes as a factory worker surrenders for wages of the same amount.

It may be argued that a collective farmer is better off than a worker, and is able to pay more taxes, because he does not buy his food. This is undoubtedly true, but, on the other hand, the collective farmer usually pays higher prices for consumer goods than do people in towns, and he is also expressly excluded from the benefits of the Soviet Social Insurance legislation.

The collective farmer is, however, still comparatively lucky from the taxation point of view compared with those few peasants who have dared to remain outside the collective farms altogether. These peasants are treated with much greater harshness. If their income is very small they have to pay an agricultural tax three times as high as the corresponding income tax rate of the town worker. But an individual farmer whose earnings exceed 8,000 roubles a year, has four-fifths of it taken away by the Soviet tax inspector. The agricultural tax is intended to make private farming so unremunerative that the individual peasant will ultimately be forced to join a collective farm.

At the same time the tax strengthens the discipline inside the Kolkhoz itself. Every peasant knows only too well that the agricultural tax would ruin him if he ever left the collective farm voluntarily or if the Kolkhoz management expelled him.

The Soviet régime does not want to take any chances and has, therefore, introduced yet another tax to make the life of the individual farmer more unattractive. This is a special 'horse tax' which is purposely fixed high enough to discourage a peasant from keeping horses at all.

*Income Tax*

In the towns the tax system is intended to victimise anyone who does not work for a state institution, a factory, an office or a state trading organisation, and who tries to preserve an independent position. The amount of taxes which the urban population has to pay depends not so much on the actual earnings as on the social group to which the taxpayer belongs. Industrial workers, clerks and minor officials form the most favoured category among the urban tax payers. They pay an income tax of eight per cent if their earnings are below 1,000 roubles a month. (In purchasing power that roughly equals £14). And if their earnings exceed 1,000 roubles, the tax is never greater than thirteen per cent of their total income. Craftsmen and tradesmen who have joined a co-operative are not treated quite as well. Their taxes are ten per cent higher, but even so they are not the worst hit victims of the Soviet taxation system. These are, for instance, doctors and dentists who have private practices, private nurses, and private dance and music teachers. If these people have a yearly income of 30,000 roubles they have to pay twice as much in income tax as a state official or a skilled metal worker who is earning the same amount.

But the Soviet tax inspector is even more ruthless in dealing with a person who earns the same 30,000 roubles as a craftsman or artisan, if he has refused to join a co operative. The income tax will exceed by three times that which a worker or an official has to pay. It is a characteristic feature of Communist fiscal legislation that

it treats priests in the same way as independent craftsmen, professional photographers and taxi-drivers. Priests of all denominations, maintained by the voluntary gifts of the believers, have thus to pay the highest income tax rate.

There are special regulations regarding the income tax of writers, composers and artists. The state looks upon them as propagandists of the régime and treats them generously, even if their income is very high. Thus a writer earning 100,000 roubles a year pays a much smaller income tax than an independent craftsman earning 50,000 roubles.

Finally, there are high incomes which are exempt of tax altogether, for instance the Stalin Prize awarded every year for outstanding achievements in the field of science, literature and art. The highest 'Stalin Prize' is 200,000 roubles—at least thirty times as much as the yearly income of an average worker. Also, the income of a super-Stakhanovite, a 'hero of Socialist Toil' or of a 'Hero of the Soviet Union,' who is a holder of a high military award, is tax-free if it does not exceed 6,000 roubles a month.

It must be admitted that only a small fraction—not more than eight per cent—of the Soviet State revenue comes from direct taxes. It would appear therefore that the tax burden which the Soviet citizen has to carry is comparatively light. Unfortunately, this is not the case, for in addition to income tax the Soviet citizen has to pay an indirect tax which provides roughly fifty-five per cent of the total state revenue. This tax is officially called 'turn over tax' but it is, in fact, identical with the sales or purchase tax in other countries.



*Turn-over Tax*

This sales tax is responsible for the high prices of consumer goods in the Soviet Union and accounts largely for the low standard of living of the Russian people. In democratic countries the sales tax is not usually applied to the primary necessities of life, foodstuff and certain clothing articles. In Soviet Russia, however, the same tax is enforced indiscriminately; it hits the housewife who buys a loaf of bread in the same way as it hits the buyer of a motor-car.

It would be a mistake to think that in Communist Russia taxes are high on luxury goods and low on necessary food items. On the contrary, bread, meat, sugar and salt usually have taxes ranging from sixty to eighty per cent of the sales price. As a fair average it may be said that the turn-over tax absorbs at least one half of the amount which the population spends on retail purchases in state and co-operative shops.

While prices for consumer and manufactured goods are kept artificially high through the purchase tax, the Soviet authorities are trying, at the same time, to keep the costs of Russian heavy industry as low as possible. There is no turn-over or sales tax on iron, steel, oil and other basic materials of industrial production which one Soviet state enterprise sells to another. In other words by charging exorbitant prices for bread, sugar, meat and butter the Soviet State finances the building of industrial giants, of power stations, canals and metallurgical plants, not to mention the boosting of the armaments industry.

*State Loans*

In addition to indirect and direct taxes the Soviet Government has imposed yet another financial obligation on the Russian people, in the form of state loans. Each year a state loan is launched in Soviet Russia to cover a part of the expenditure connected with the implementation of economic plans. Since the end of the war the annual subscription to the state loan averages roughly 1,000 roubles per head, or about 2,000 roubles for every working member of the population.

All loans raised from the population after the war are lottery loans. The bonds do not bear any interest but about one-third of them have a chance to win prizes in the forty lottery drawings which are held during twenty years, the lifetime of each loan. Those bonds which fail to win prizes are repaid according to their face value. As ninety-eight per cent of the prizes are very small—they vary between 200 and 500 roubles per one-hundred-rouble bond—the loans are not very popular and would presumably be entirely unsuccessful if subscription were voluntary.

There is, it is true, no law compelling a Soviet citizen to take a share in a loan. In practice, however, official propaganda has created an atmosphere in which the 'unanimous and universal subscription' to each consecutive state loan becomes a 'patriotic duty,' from which no wage-earner can shrink. As soon as a new loan is launched, meetings are held in factories and resolutions are passed, pledging every worker to make his contribution. These contributions are then simply deducted from the wages

by the factory management. It is not surprising, therefore, that Soviet citizens consider loans not as an investment but as a gift to the state.

Some people, after having been forced to buy the bonds, try to get rid of them by selling them on the black market at about a third of their nominal value. People who are in urgent need of cash get rid of the bonds for even less than that. In most cases it would be much more profitable for an individual Soviet citizen to put his savings into a state savings bank where he would get regular interest, and where he could freely withdraw of his money. But it is the purpose of the state loans to absorb most of what the average Russian can put aside during the year, and to keep down the total amount of savings deposits. They are small in comparison to the twenty billion roubles subscribed to the average annual state loan. In fact, for every rouble which a Soviet citizen puts in a deposit account in a state savings bank he surrenders five roubles to the government in return for loan bonds.

### *Housing Rents*

There are certain compensations for the triple financial burden which the Soviet citizen has to carry in the form of income tax, turn-over tax and state loans. Many of these compensations, such as sickness benefits, children's allowances, free training of young workers, and scholarships for promising students, exist not only in Soviet Russia but also in Britain and other countries. Nevertheless the Soviet Union does boast of something of which no other European country can—extraordinarily cheap housing rents.



Indeed, rents, which constitute such a heavy drain on the budget of the average West European, are an insignificant item among the expenses of a Russian wage earner. Moreover, the amount of rent which a person has to pay is fixed in relation to his earnings, so even very poor people can afford the monthly payments to the house administration. And yet, what seems to be at the first glance one of the most positive sides of life in Soviet Russia, is one of its greatest short-comings. Russian rents are cheap for the simple reason that the Soviet citizen does not pay his rent for a house or a flat and often not even for a room. He pays rent for floor space and for what is called the 'sanitary living norm.' This norm is the legally fixed minimum and the factual maximum of housing space to which, as a rule, every person is entitled.

In most localities the norm consists of eighty-seven square feet per person, and of sixty-two square feet in towns where housing space is particularly short. This means that an average normal-sized room is, according to Soviet law, sufficient to accommodate as many as four people, provided that they are just ordinary Soviet citizens. For a small privileged group, Soviet legislation on housing makes exceptions. Responsible party, state, and trade union officials, army commanders, scientific workers, and certain well-paid artists, may claim a floor space exceeding three and a half times that which the law guarantees to the bulk of the population.

Writers and composers also receive better housing accommodation, not on the strength of their work but as members of the writers' or composers' union. If the union expells a writer or a composer, as it does sometimes,

he ceases to belong to the Soviet *élite* and forfeits, automatically, all material advantages connected with his previous status.

This is significant of Soviet conditions in general. A flat, a motor-car, or a country house are available to a person only as long as he performs certain services useful to the state. By granting additional housing space to a member of the Soviet upper class, the régime not only rewards him for past accomplishments, but also seeks to safeguard his future political reliability. The privileges of the new ruling class, are, therefore, difficult to acquire and easy to lose. And those who lose them sink far below the level of the ordinary Soviet citizen; they become the pariahs of Soviet society.

## XVI

### THE SOLDIER AND THE RÉGIME

*(The author of this chapter is J. M. MACKINTOSH, an expert on the history of the Soviet armed forces)*



UNLIKE all other armed forces of the world the Red Army was not created for the defence of a state but as a fighting weapon of an ideology. Lenin's decree of January 18, 1918, which brought the Red Army into being said that it would 'serve as a support for the approaching Socialist revolution in Europe.' The hopes which Lenin had pinned on the Red Army were not fulfilled; fundamentally the army remained what it had been on the very first day of its existence, an army in the service of an ideology and of a party, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

#### *Professional Revolutionaries or Professional Soldiers?*

The party control over the Red Army passed through two distinct phases. First the party attempted to effect control ensuring that the Red Army was run on entirely new and different lines from those of the 'Orthodox' armies of the West. The party hoped that by the introduction of a new relationship between officers and men, new systems of command, and a new type of organisation,



the army could be kept closely under political control, and would not develop into an independent body with a professional officer class holding its own corporate views on political affairs. When this method proved ineffective in the late thirties, a second way of control was found, permitting the creation of an orthodox officer class on Western lines, but with the closest supervision over the commanders by political commissars.

Originally the Communist Party preferred to rely on the first method. The Communist leaders were determined to recruit the army only from workers and peasants, and to insist that all officers and entrants to the officers' schools should be of worker or peasant origin. The army was divided into two parts: a small regular force of twenty-nine divisions for frontier defence, and a larger auxiliary army of forty-two divisions. These auxiliary formations were stationed near the industrial centres, so that the junior command posts should be in the hands of the proletariat. The idea was that workers and peasants should devote part of their spare time to military training. They were to feel that the army was as much part of their normal work as was their job at the factory.

Strictly speaking, then, political control of the army was exercised through the commanders, while the political commissars were concerned with the political indoctrination of the soldiers called up for military service. At this time, too, a great deal of emphasis fell on Communist theory; many officers refused to wear badges of rank, and there were no separate messes for officers. All ranks ate and slept in the same quarters, and the differences in pay between a private soldier and an army commander were negligible.

This state of affairs lasted, roughly speaking, until the end of the first Five-Year Plan in 1932. This plan created a modern armaments industry in the Soviet Union. War industry brought with it mechanisation, and mechanisation brought new military theories. All this involved a higher standard of technical knowledge than that possessed by commanders who rose to fame in partisan warfare or calvary attacks during the civil war. Consequently the commanding personnel of the Red Army had to 'go to school,' and this in its turn gave birth to the elements of a professional officers' corps. The 'Red commander' became a 'military specialist' and, as such, began to regard his career more in the light of a profession. Much of the early and easy-going comradeship between officers and men disappeared. Officers' pay and conditions improved, and reforms were introduced setting up separate officers' messes and other privileges for the commanders.

### *Officers and Commissars*

During the second Five-Year Plan which ran from 1933 to 1937 a new and important factor appeared. The full ruthlessness of forcible collectivisation struck the villages of the Soviet Union, and created a peasant antagonism against the Soviet régime—an antagonism which has not abated even to-day.

Red Army officers, who were becoming increasingly proud of their profession found that peasants called up to the army were in a rebellious mood and had no desire to defend the Soviet régime. Naturally the efficiency of the army declined seriously, and the government and

party leaders became alarmed at the independent line taken by the officers, and even by the political workers who were supposed to ensure party control over officers and men. In 1937, therefore, when the great political purge which Stalin carried out in every walk of Soviet life hit the army, the striking fact was that the political organs of the Red Army suffered equally with the purely military ones.

It cannot be said for certain what is the truth about the army purge, but one thing is clear: between the summer of 1937 and the autumn of the following year the entire High Command of the Red Army and its entire political leadership was destroyed. To give only one example: the commander of every military district in the Soviet Union was openly executed or disappeared without trace, and of the fifteen army commanders appointed in 1935 only one was still alive in 1938.

Basically the facts of the situation were these: the system of political control set up after the civil war had become outdated by the 'professionalisation' of the officer class. It was impossible to ensure the complete subordination of military interests to party interests when the officers felt themselves so bound together, and when the political commissars' duties had lost much of their executive character. After 1937 the party leadership realised that political control of the army would have to take the form of a return to the civil war system, under which the commissar had the right to countermand operational orders and to exercise a supervisory control over the commanding personnel.

This was, in fact, effected. In August, 1937, a new statute



was introduced into the army which placed the commissar in a position of equality with the commander. In many cases, however, the commissars' position was even stronger. The leading places in the army were now taken by a new class of officer. They were young men who had, in some cases, been promoted straight from the rank of subaltern to command brigades or divisions, and whose military knowledge did not match the rapidity of their promotion. As a result, these young men found themselves ill-equipped to inspire those under their command, particularly as, in the eyes of the peasant soldiers, they were identified with approval of forced collectivisation.

During this period both efficiency and discipline suffered severely. The commanders increasingly turned for help to the commissars—whom they felt were, in the eyes of the party, the real commanders of the army—but the military knowledge of the commissars was even less than that of the new commanders. The bad effects of this state of affairs became even worse in view of the numerical growth of the Red Army and its increasing mechanisation. In 1939 the auxiliary army was entirely abolished, and merged into the regular army, which now numbered some hundred divisions. Thus, when Germany launched the Second World War, the Soviet Army, although it was the largest in Europe, and contained very powerful armoured formations, was weakened by the fact that its commanding personnel had little experience and only poor control over their units.

At the same time, the conditions of the rank and file had not improved proportionately with those of the

officers' corps, and the morale in many units was extremely low, owing to the antagonism of the peasant soldiers to collectivisation.

It was this army which went to war in Finland in December, 1939, and which bungled the invasion of that country, in spite of overwhelming numerical superiority. Although the Finnish war was later successful, the government and party leaders were seriously alarmed, and, as soon as the war was over, new and sweeping changes were introduced into the army. These reforms, included the abolition of commissars' dual control and the imposition of a draconic disciplinary code. Nearly everything, including some measure of direct party control in the army, was sacrificed to pure military efficiency. Commanders of units were granted almost unlimited powers over their men, and a kind of permanent partial mobilisation was put into effect.

### *Officers and Men*

When the German invasion came in 1941 the army had made good use of its breathing space in a material sense, and some hundred and sixty-seven divisions stood at the front line and in immediate reserve to meet the German onslaught.

On the other hand, however, the harshness of the new disciplinary code had created more resentment than efficiency, and the moral of the peasant soldiers had sunk still further. Nor had the efficiency of the high command increased. As a result, the early weeks of the war were characterised by a series of uninterrupted disasters. There

were defections at the front, and on many sectors the command lost all control of the troops in the field. By August, 1941, the Germans already held well over half a million Russian deserters and prisoners. Although the German offensive of 1941 was halted at the gates of Moscow, it became clear to government and party leaders that if the Red Army's moral and fighting spirit were going to be improved, some other incentive would have to be found.

Then a momentous decision was taken to intensify a trend which had already made its appearance even before the war. This was a great and wholesale appeal to Russian national sentiment. In all kinds of ways the Red Army was made to feel that it was a national army, defending its fatherland.

It was this intensively nationalistic army which finally threw back the German invaders, and occupied Eastern and Central Europe. Once the war was over the party and government was faced once more with the task of re-asserting complete political control over the army. A return to the system of the thirties was out of the question, so the party leaders put their trust in two weapons: an increase in the supervisory control of the political commissars over the commanding personnel—which resulted in the disappearance of a number of distinguished Soviet generals—and secondly, an increase in the harshness of the disciplinary code.

In this way the Soviet Army to-day is once more under the control of the Russian Communist Party—and the most striking result of this is the complete lack of freedom and rights accorded to the ordinary soldier and junior



officer. While the senior generals live in conditions of great luxury, the lower ranks' life resembles that of convicts. There is, of course, a complete barrier between officers and men. Even in peace time the commander has almost unlimited powers. According to the disciplinary code: 'The commander has the right to apply all measures of coercion up to and including the application of force and firearms.'

A prominent military jurist wrote in the army paper *Red Star* on October 22, 1940: 'Comradely relations between soldiers and officers are no more. The hail-fellow-well-met spirit in relationships between a commander and a subordinate can have no place in the Red Army. Discussion of any kind is absolutely prohibited among the subordinates.'

Saluting is strictly enforced, and a soldier must even salute his NCOs. Failure to salute may mean five days under close arrest; soldiers are forbidden to carry parcels in the street, because this might prevent them saluting. Absence without leave for three hours may result in punishment of up to ten years in a concentration camp.

The differences of pay in the army are tremendous: a private gets 350 roubles a year, and a marshal 40,000. Finally, to sum up Communism in Practice in the Red Army to-day, here is a quotation from *Pravda* of October 6, 1940, by a well-known Red Army general: 'Submission of group grievances for others is prohibited. No more group declarations, no more joint discussions—whether concerning an order or bad food or any other topic—all this comes under the heading of "insubordination" and

for it a soldier may be shot on the spot without a court-martial, hearing or investigation, if a superior officer solely and personally decides.'

The Soviet Army of to-day is thus more reactionary in character, more harsh in discipline, and more class-ridden in organisation than the Imperial Russian Army which the Bolshevik revolution destroyed in 1917.

## XVII

### COMMUNISM AND RUSSIAN NATIONALISM



THE Soviet régime is still adhering to those fundamental ideas on which it was built in 1917 at the time of the October Revolution. It still upholds the principle of party dictatorship in Russia itself, and it is still supporting Communism in the rest of the world. Nothing could be further from the truth, therefore than the assertion that Stalin has betrayed the revolution.

But Stalin has given the Communist Party of the Soviet Union ideals and aspirations which were alien to most of the founders of the Soviet State. During the last fifteen years Stalin has revived certain Russian nationalist ideals and aspirations which the revolution seemed to have thrown overboard. The leader of the Soviet State has gone as far as to connect Russian nationalism almost organically with the Communist programme. Russian nationalism and Communism have thus become intertwined to such an extent that it is often difficult to say which of the two inspires a given action of the Soviet Government.

It may appear paradoxical that the man responsible for the resurrection of Russian nationalism in the Communist



State has himself not a drop of Russian blood in his veins. Stalin is a Georgian, but it is exactly this fact that explains why he was able to become a more enthusiastic Russian patriot than any genuine Russian might have been. The Georgians are an ancient Christian people of Transcaucasia roughly two million strong. For several centuries they have looked to Moscow for protection against their oriental neighbours Persia and Turkey, who, in the past, frequently invaded Georgian territory.

Many Georgians had played a distinguished rôle at the court of the Czar as generals, diplomats and statesmen. These high dignitaries had never tried to conduct a special Georgian national policy, but had always been most ardent champions of Russian national interests. Stalin and several of his Georgian Communist friends have trodden in their footsteps and have put themselves wholeheartedly at the service of the Russian cause. ✓

{ In propagating Russian nationalism, in addition to the idea of world Communism, Stalin was guided not only by his own Georgian background; he also took into account the numerical strength of the Russian and Slav element in the USSR. Stalin felt that the slogan about the Soviet Union being a country of 180 peoples was utterly unrealistic. Most of these 180 peoples were, indeed, numerically too insignificant to play a major rôle in the Soviet State. Others, again, had no working class, which according to Lenin's doctrine is called upon to lead the masses of the peasantry. A variety of small national minorities with their different background and traditions could not give stability to the Soviet State; only the one hundred million strong Russian people could. Only the Russians, together with other Slavs like

Ukrainians and Byelorussians, and with half-Russianised Georgians as principal junior partners, could implement the big programme of industrialisation and safeguard the building of Communism.

Bearing all this in mind Stalin decided to restore to the Russians the privileged position which they seemed to have lost after 1917. In the second half of the thirties he embarked on a new policy—the policy of Soviet patriotism—which brought the Russian language and Russia's historical past into prominence again. A decree of the Soviet Government, dated March 13, 1938, made the teaching of the Russian language obligatory in all schools of national minorities.

At about the same time Soviet state publishing houses started the mass production of books and pamphlets extolling famous Russian military leaders, statesmen and diplomats of bygone days. The great personalities of Russian history, such as the Czars Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great, became the heroes of plays, films and novels. The new Russian patriotic trend became particularly popular with the Soviet armed forces. They were not satisfied with being merely a revolutionary army and a revolutionary navy; they wanted to boast of a tradition of long standing. To comply with the wishes of military circles, the Soviet Government not only restored those old army ranks such as 'major-general' or 'lieutenant-general,' which had been abolished after the October Revolution; even the title of 'marshal,' obsolete in Russia for over a hundred years, was re-introduced.)

✓ The war—the great patriotic war—as the Soviet Government called it officially, accelerated the new ideological development. A few weeks after the beginning of



the German invasion the Soviet leadership started to promote the idea of Slav brotherhood to which the Russians, as the largest Slav people, had a special contribution to make. This was another important step back to Czarist Russia, which, in its foreign policy, had always posed as champion of Slav peoples such as Bulgars, Czechs and Serbs.

Under the auspices of the Soviet Government several Slav Conferences were organised in Moscow. A permanent all-Slav Committee was founded under the direction of the Soviet general, Gundorov. Chairs for Slav literature and languages were established on all major Russian universities and a special periodical on Slav co-operation was published. While Slav racial solidarity was allowed to develop, every other racial pan-ism remained strictly prohibited in the USSR. This applied in particular to the many million strong Turkic peoples of the Soviet Union. All their efforts towards greater unity both in the cultural and political sphere have been persistently denounced in recent years as expressions of anti-Soviet nationalism.

/ Both pan-Slav propaganda and the cult of the Russian past were carried on after the war. Thus in September, 1947, the Soviet Government celebrated the 800th anniversary of the foundation of Moscow in a demonstrative way. Special trains, ships and aeroplanes brought guests from all parts of the country to the capital. One hundred and fifty parties of artists were engaged to give concerts and variety shows all over Moscow. And most important of all, Stalin himself issued a special message on the occasion.

The Stalin message was a classic expression of the dual face of present Soviet Russia for the Soviet Prime Minister



stressed that Moscow was both the initiator in the building of a centralised Russian State and the centre of world Communism.

In the middle of May, 1950, another big manifestation of Soviet patriotism took place in connection with the 150th anniversary of the death of Field-Marshal Suvorov. Solemn meetings were held in Suvorov's honour in all big cities of the USSR, lectures were delivered and exhibitions organised about Suvorov's life and deeds. Even the non-Russian peoples had to participate in the glorification of the Field-Marshal. The Central Asian Republic of Uzbekistan, for instance, which had not the slightest historic connection with the Russian military leader had to issue a pamphlet on his exploits.

Soviet patriotism, which in its beginnings had been a rather sound reaction against the exaggerated abstract internationalism during the years following the October Revolution, has greatly changed its character since the end of the war. It was transformed more and more into a narrow-minded nationalism which is alien to the pro-Western and cosmopolitan traditions of the most outstanding figures of pre-revolutionary Russian culture.

To understand this development we must remember that the war had broken down a part of the wall which the Russian Communist leaders had erected to separate the USSR from the outside world. Soviet scientists, artists and writers had been given an opportunity to make friends with their opposite numbers in Britain and America and to exchange views with them. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of young Russians, members of the Russian fighting forces and of the occupation troops, for the first time in their lives, had a chance to meet



foreigners and to see what the capitalist world was really like. They could not fail noticing that a great deal of what they had heard about Europe from official Soviet sources had been untrue. They found that even countries greatly affected by the war had a higher standard of living than Soviet Russia.

In short, the contact which both the Russian intellectuals and the soldiers and officers established with the West in the war, and post-war period, created a situation which required the intervention of the Soviet Government.

In an attempt to nip in the bud the emergence of a pro-Western tendency in the USSR, the Soviet Government launched a big nation-wide campaign against the so-called 'servile adulation of things foreign.' The campaign of hatred against foreign influence was at first conducted against Europe alone but very soon it was extended to Asia as well. 'Servility' towards Arabic, Persian, Turkish or Mongol culture was, in the eyes of the Soviet Government, just as bad as an expression of solidarity with Western European civilisation.

The new ideological offensive which was aiming at the total intellectual isolation of the Soviet Union started in August, 1946, and has not yet ended. It has been conducted with great thoroughness and has affected newspapers, writers' organisations, universities, the All-Union Academy of Sciences and the trade union organisations. Many people have lost their jobs, and many others their freedom, in the course of the campaign.

The action of the Soviet Government had more than a purely negative side. It also found expression in a propaganda drive, on a large scale, destined to raise the self-confidence of the Russian people. Through the many

channels at its disposal the Kremlin told the Russians that they had nothing to learn from the West and that they were fully entitled to claim leadership in the world not only because they had built the first Socialist State but also because of their past achievements. Soviet state dignitaries and university professors drew up a long list of claims showing that the Russians had the priority of almost all big inventions and discoveries of mankind. The inventions which were said to have first been made by Russians included amongst others, the radio, every type of aircraft, dynamite, the cinecamera, the tramcar, the motor ship, the steam engine, synthetic rubber, the telegraph and the telephone. }

During the years 1949 and 1950 in particular no week passed without an authoritative Soviet personality staking a sensational priority claim. Vice-Admiral Kulakov asserted that Russia had built the first cruiser and the first submarine. Academician Obraztsov stated the Russia had its first railways long before Western Europe and America. Marshal of the Soviet tank forces Bogdanov said the Russians had been the first to have made designs for tanks.

These and other claims are not only an interesting reflection of the ideology that at present dominates the USSR but some of them may even affect foreign policy, in particular the claims concerning Russian geographical discoveries.

Soviet Russia, which has described itself so often as a state of workers and peasants, is now taking the credit for all discoveries made by explorers who were either Russian aristocrats or foreign navigators in the service of the Czars. Admiral Yumashov, the Commander of the



Soviet Navy, went as far as to say that Russian explorers had discovered one-third of the world. These discoveries extended to Alaska and Australia; they also included parts of America and the antarctic continent, he said.

In one case the pseudo-scientific research work into Russian geographical discoveries has already resulted in diplomatic action. In 1946 Soviet geographers suddenly started the publication of research work on Russian explorations in the Antarctic region, and in June, 1950, the Soviet Government sent a note to seven powers demanding to be given a say in all matters concerning the future régime of the Antarctic. The note expressly mentioned the feats of Russian navigators in Antarctic waters at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The Soviet Government has tried to foster Russian nationalist trends in the USSR not only by an intense internal propaganda campaign, but also by its foreign policy. During the past ten years the Soviet Government has shown by its deeds that it is determined to promote Russian national interests and Russian territorial expansion with greater insistence than even the Czarist Government did. It has been a matter of pride to the Soviet leaders that they have not only fulfilled most of the territorial demands of the previous régime but have even expanded at several points beyond the frontiers which the Empire of the Czars had had at any time in history.

The territories which the Soviet Union annexed during and after the Second World War were occupied not in the name of world Communism but admittedly for Russian and Slav nationalist considerations and for strategic reasons. { Eastern Poland was united with the

USSR to satisfy the desires of the Ukrainians and Byelorussians for national unity. The Baltic States became part of the Union because they had been linked with Russia from times immemorial—as Soviet propaganda put it. The annexation of Japanese Southern Sakhalin constituted a revenge for its loss by Czarist Russia in 1905. The Japanese Kurile Islands and the German district of Königsberg, both of which the USSR annexed in 1945, have since then been frequently described in the Soviet Press as genuinely Russian lands although no Russian had lived there until a few years ago.

The usage by the Soviet Government of a nationalist Russian terminology cannot, however, obscure the fact that the Russians are one of the oppressed peoples of the Soviet Empire. Russian culture and language and certain Russian national aspirations, it is true, have become tools for the oppression of other nations. Nevertheless, the Russian people remain victims of Communism and prisoners of a totalitarian police state.





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